

# Phosphorus Management: Questions of Balance

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**Saskatchewan Soils and Crops Workshop**  
**March 7, 2018**



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# P Balance Issues

1. Short term vs. long term P management strategies
2. Crop production vs. environmental protection
3. Environmental challenges for P vs. other environmental challenges



# Why is phosphorus balance important?

**Food - P is a unique element that is essential for almost all life**



Source: Christiansen/  
Scientific American

**Water - small amounts of excess P cause big problems with water quality**

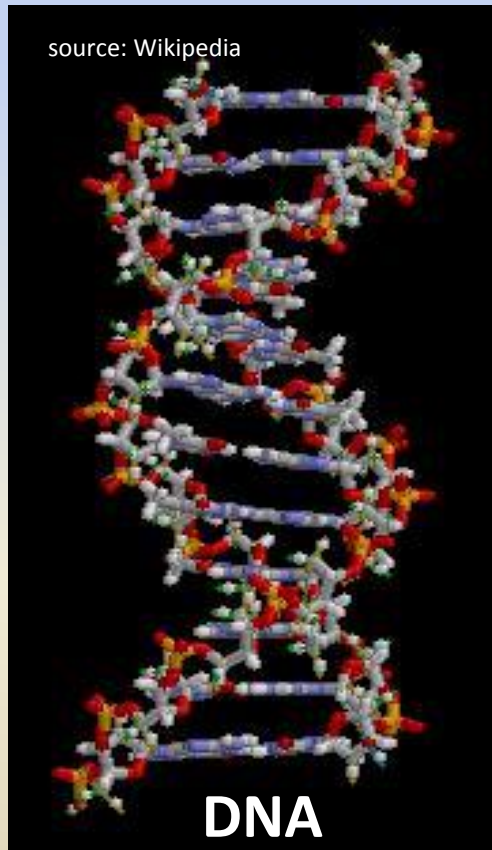


Photo: MB Conservation

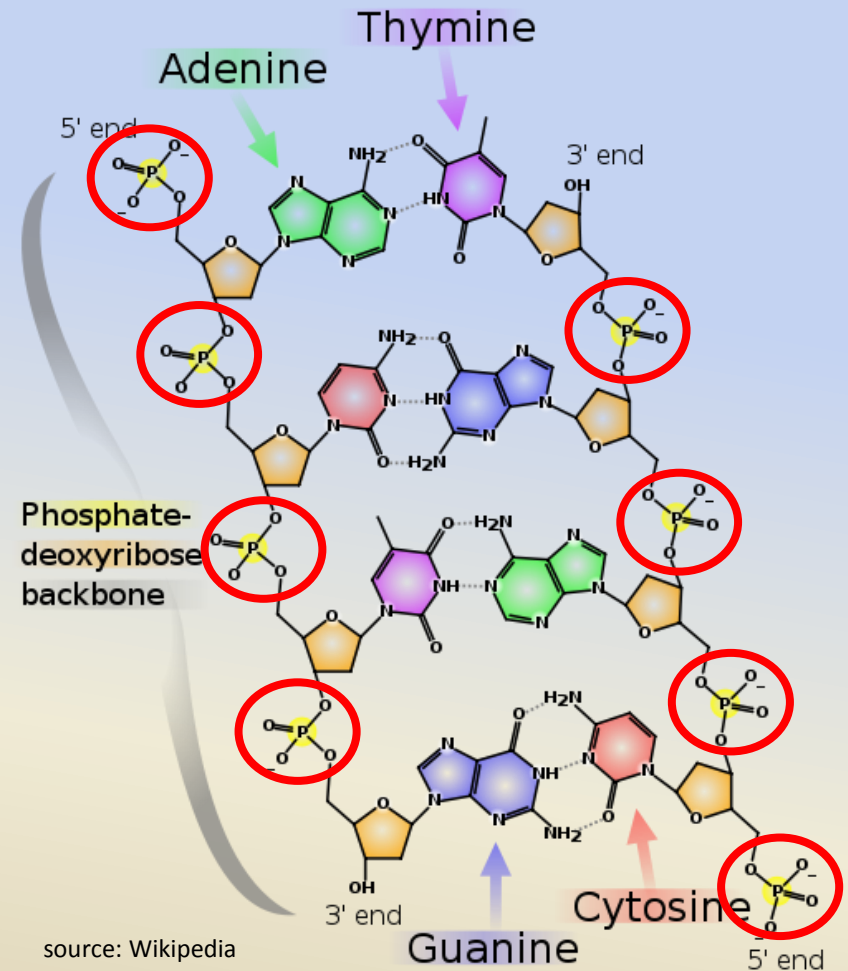


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# Examples of molecules that are vital for life and that require P



genetic coding & control



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# P Management in Corn & Soybeans in Manitoba

**Gustavo Bardella**



**Magda Rogalsky**



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# Corn Production in Manitoba



Photo: Pembina Valley On-Line

- Grain corn acres & yields are increasing in MB
- Short growing season and cold soils at planting
- Often planted on land with canola in rotation
- Conservation tillage an important BMP

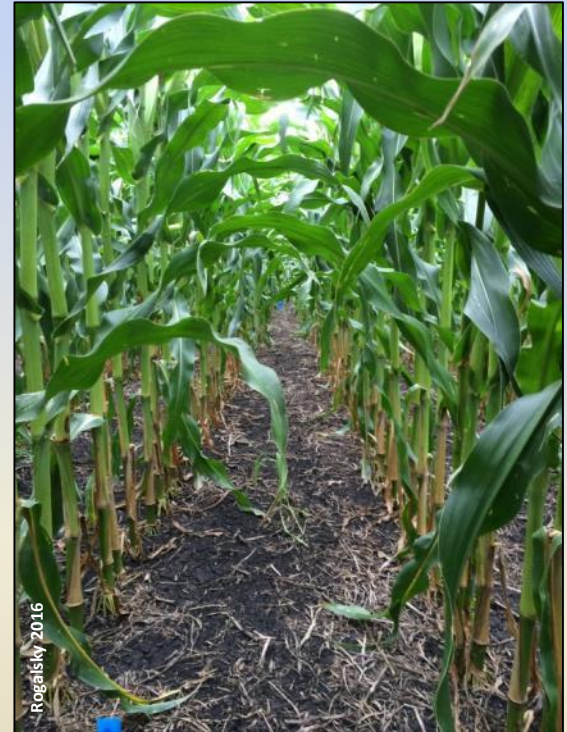


# Corn Rotation Study: Starter P & Zn

**Fertilization strategies for corn grown after canola (non-mycorrhizal) vs. soybean**



**P?**  
**Zn?**



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# Corn Rotation Study Treatments

## Crop Treatments - Canola or Soybeans

## Fertilizer Treatments (sidebanded 2" by 1" at planting)

### Control

#### 1. No P Check

### MAP (11-52-0) + AS (21-0-0-24)

2. 27  $P_2O_5$  0 Zn 6.8 S lbs/ac

3. 54  $P_2O_5$  0 Zn 13.5 S lbs/ac

### MicroEssentials SZ (12-40-0-10S-1Zn)

4. 27  $P_2O_5$  0.68 Zn 6.8 S lbs/ac

5. 54  $P_2O_5$  1.35 Zn 13.5 S lbs/ac



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# Corn Rotation Study: Early Season Response to Starter



MAP 27 lb  $P_2O_5$ /ac

No P Check



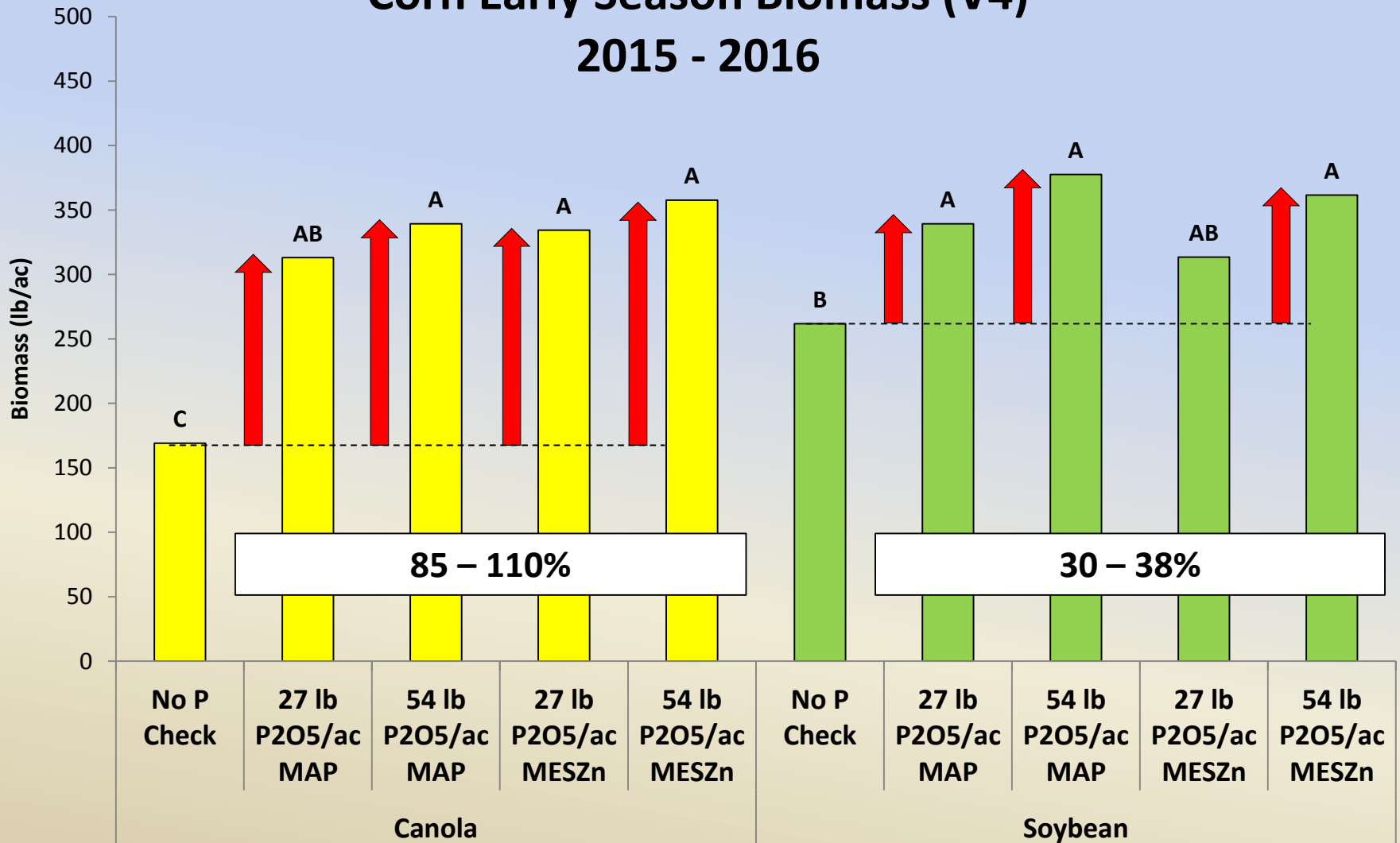
P deficiency symptoms at V3



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# Corn Rotation Study

## Corn Early Season Biomass (V4) 2015 - 2016



# Corn Rotation Study

## Silking differences as compared to control plots

Site-year	Maturity Advance (days)	Fertilizer and Crop
Carman 2015	+2 to 3	All fertilizer treatments, corn on canola
Stephenfield 2015	ns	ns
Carman 2016	+2 to 7	All fertilizer treatments, regardless of crop



**Earlier tasseling and taller corn plants with spring side-banded 27 lb  $P_2O_5$ /ac as MAP (L) and 27 lb  $P_2O_5$ /ac as MESZn (R) vs. control (M) at Carman following canola stubble**

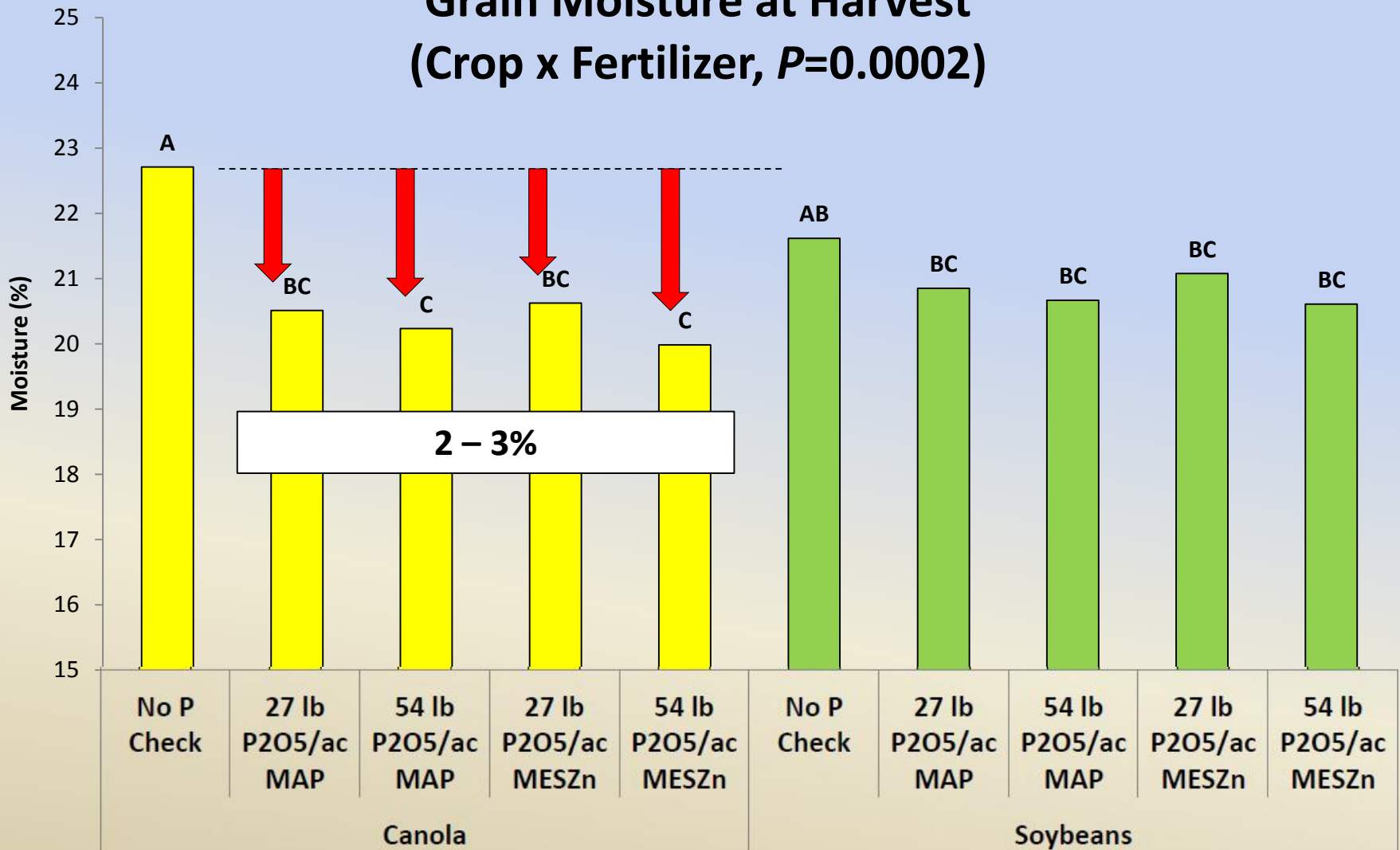


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# Corn Rotation Study

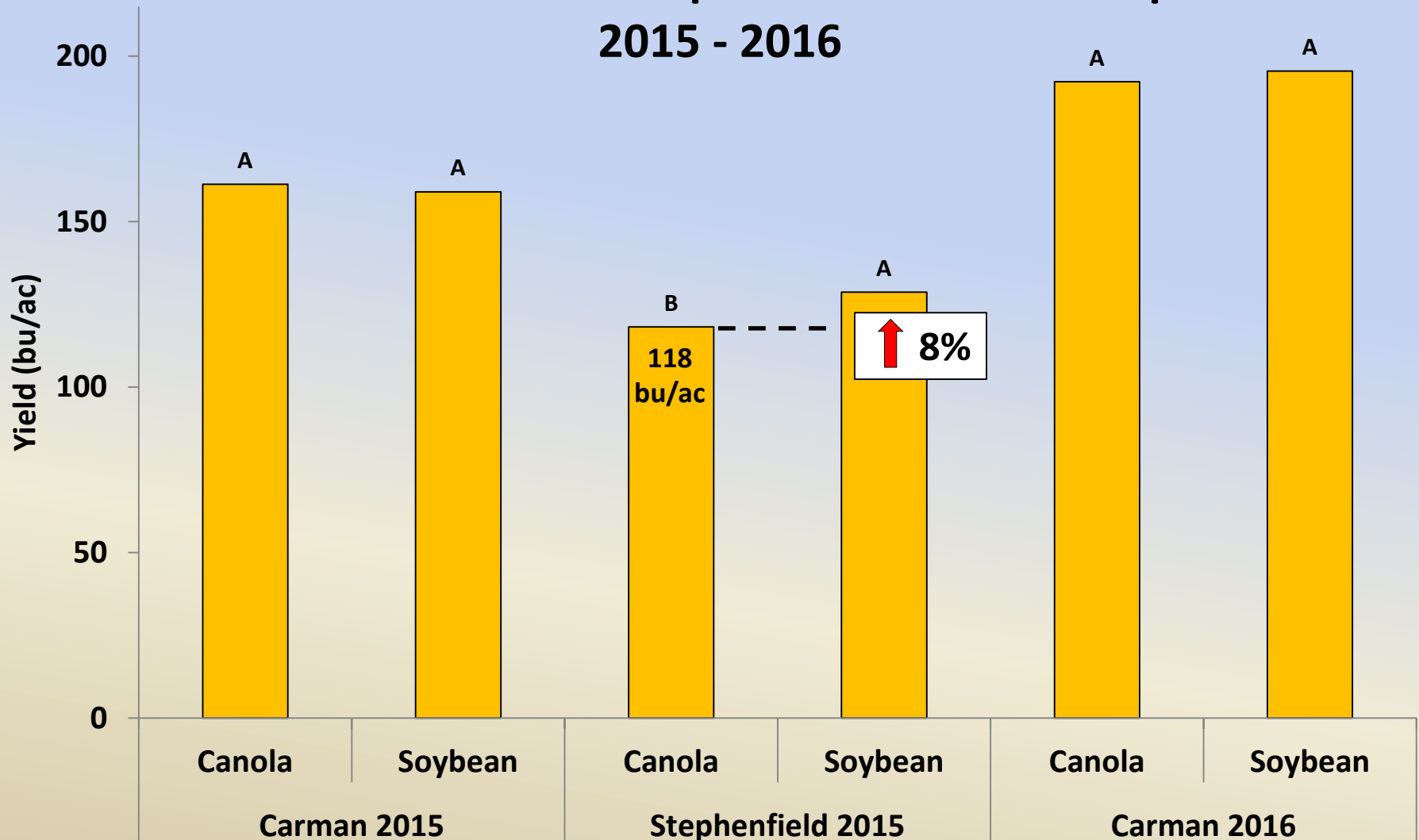
## Grain Moisture at Harvest (Crop x Fertilizer, $P=0.0002$ )





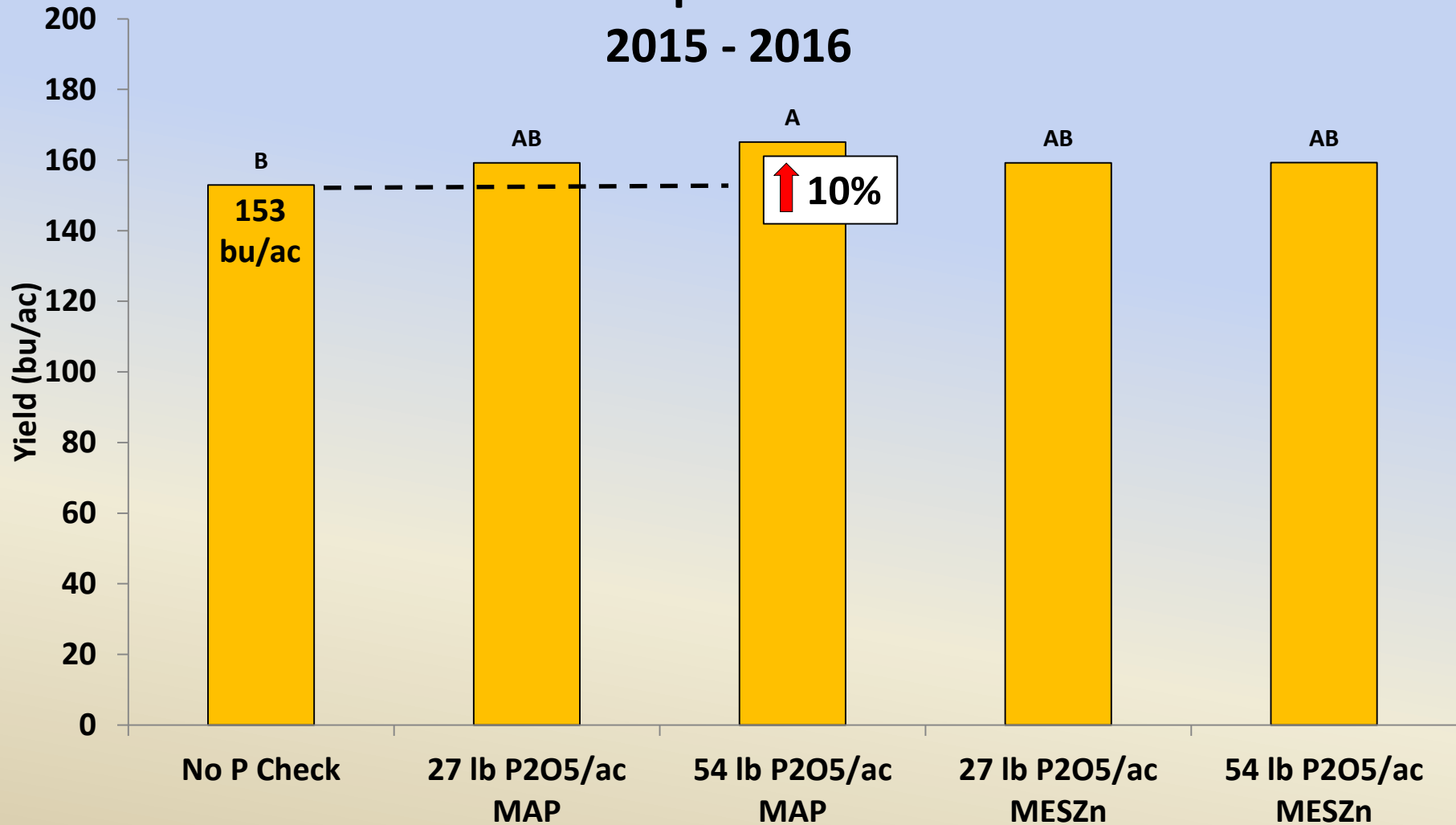
# Corn Rotation Study

## Corn Grain Yield Response to Previous Crop 2015 - 2016



# Corn Rotation Study

## Corn Grain Yield Response to Starter Fertilizer 2015 - 2016



# Corn Strip Till Study – P Timing & Placement

**P fertilization strategies for corn planted in strip tillage vs. conventional tillage**



**P?**



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# Corn Strip Till Study: 2 Previous Tillage Treatments



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# Corn Strip Till Study: 5 Fertilizer Treatments (lbs/ac, spring (2" by 1") and fall application (4-5"))

## CONTROL

### 1. No P Check

## MAP (11-52-0) Only

2. 27 P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> SPRING SB

3. 54 P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> SPRING SB

4. 27 P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> FALL DB

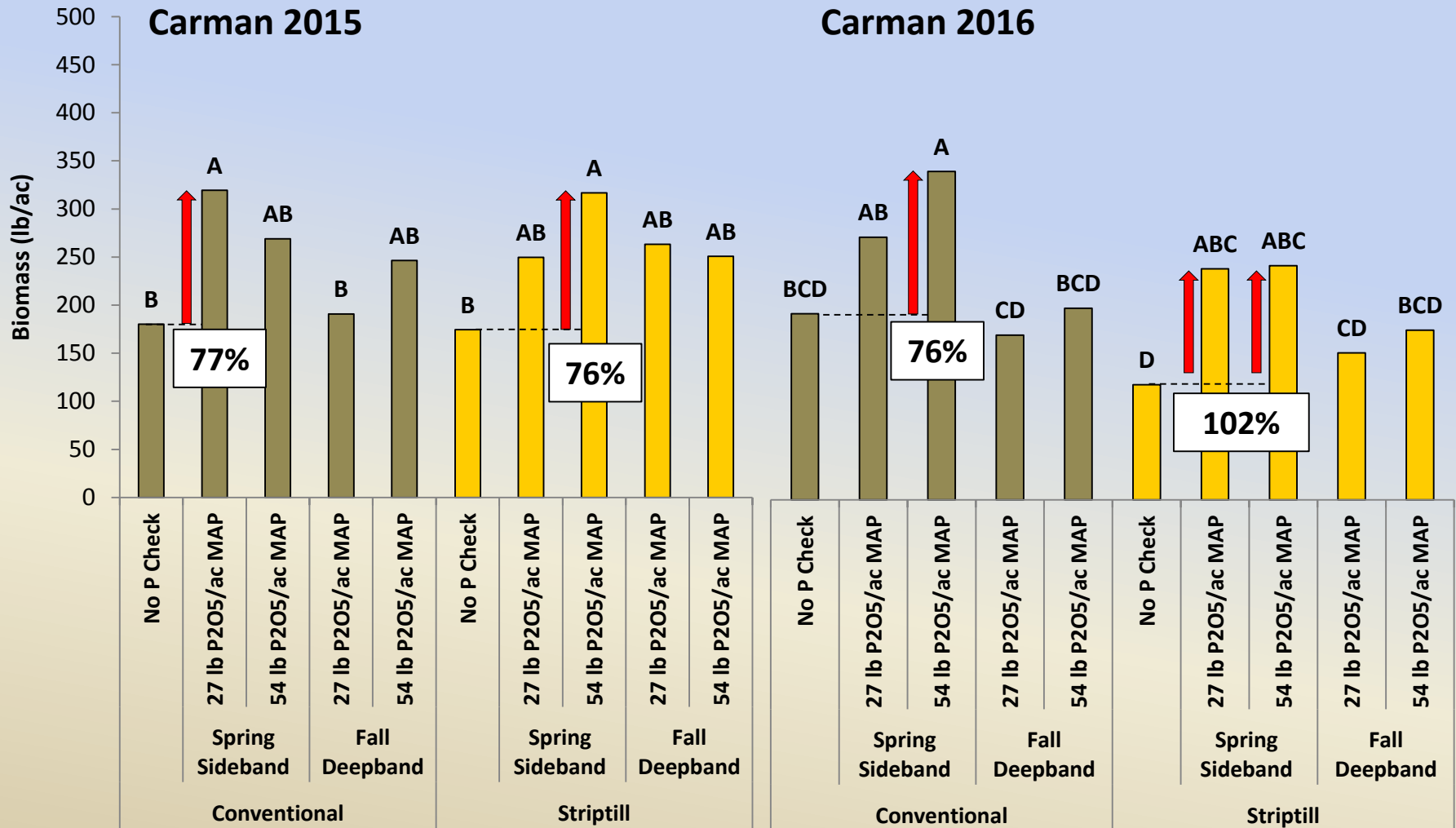
5. 54 P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> FALL DB



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# Corn Strip Till Study

Corn Early Season Biomass (V4) 2015 - 2016

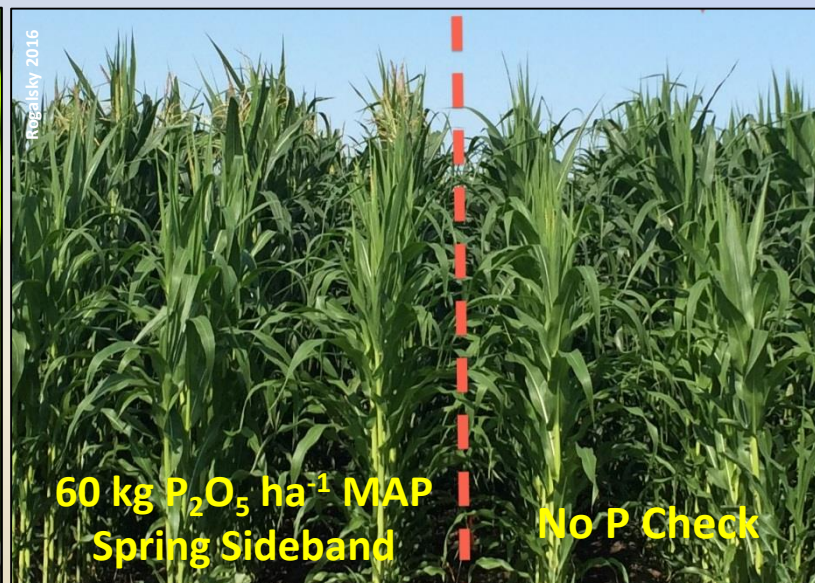


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# Corn Strip Till Study

Silking differences as compared to control plots

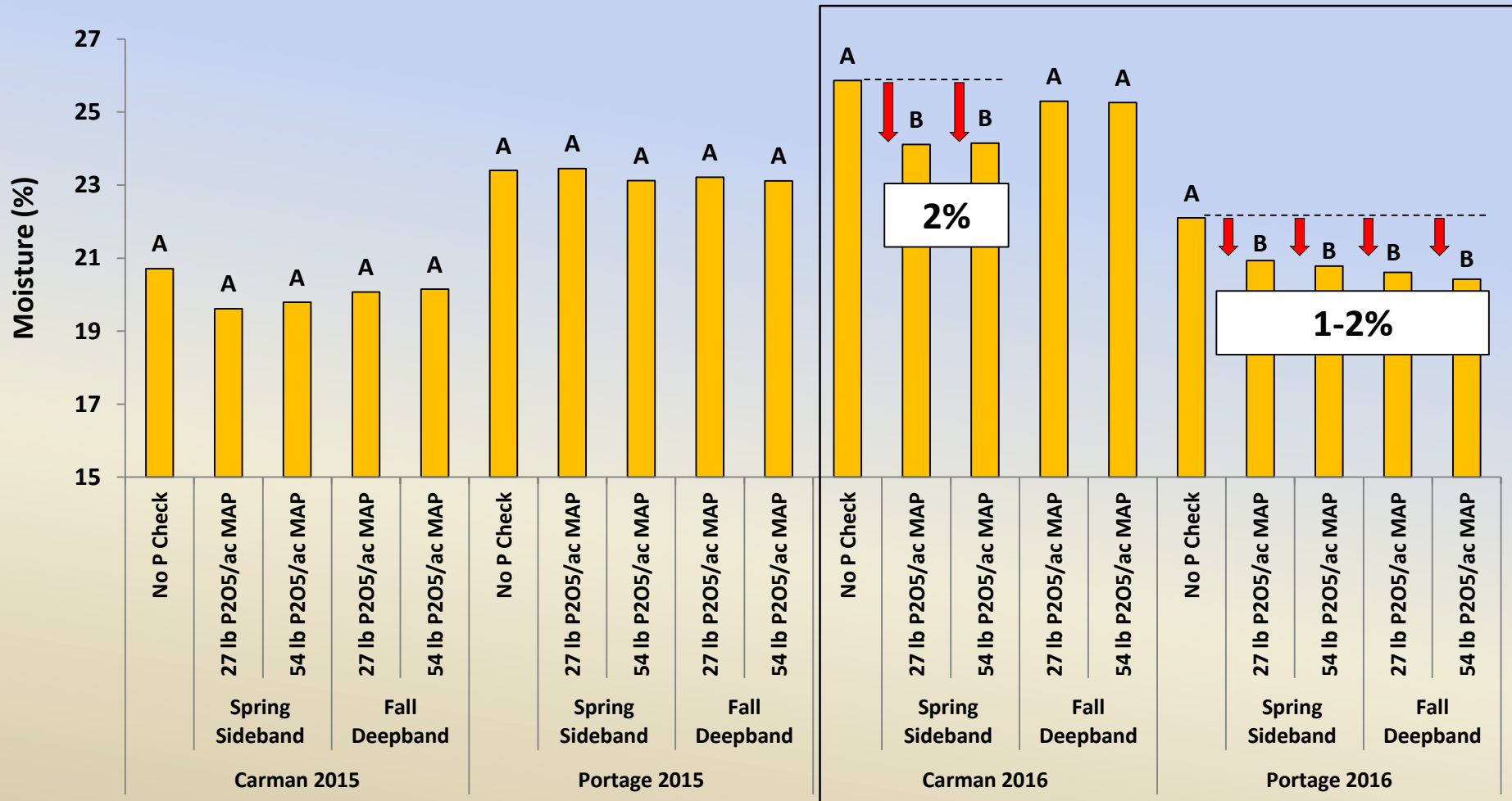
Site-year	Maturity Advance (days)	Fertilizer
Carman 2015	+2	All fertilizer treatments
Portage la Prairie 2015	ns	ns
Carman 2016	+3 to 4	Both rates of spring side-banded MAP
Portage la Prairie 2016	ns	ns



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# Corn Strip Till Study

## Kernel Moisture at Harvest 2015 - 2016

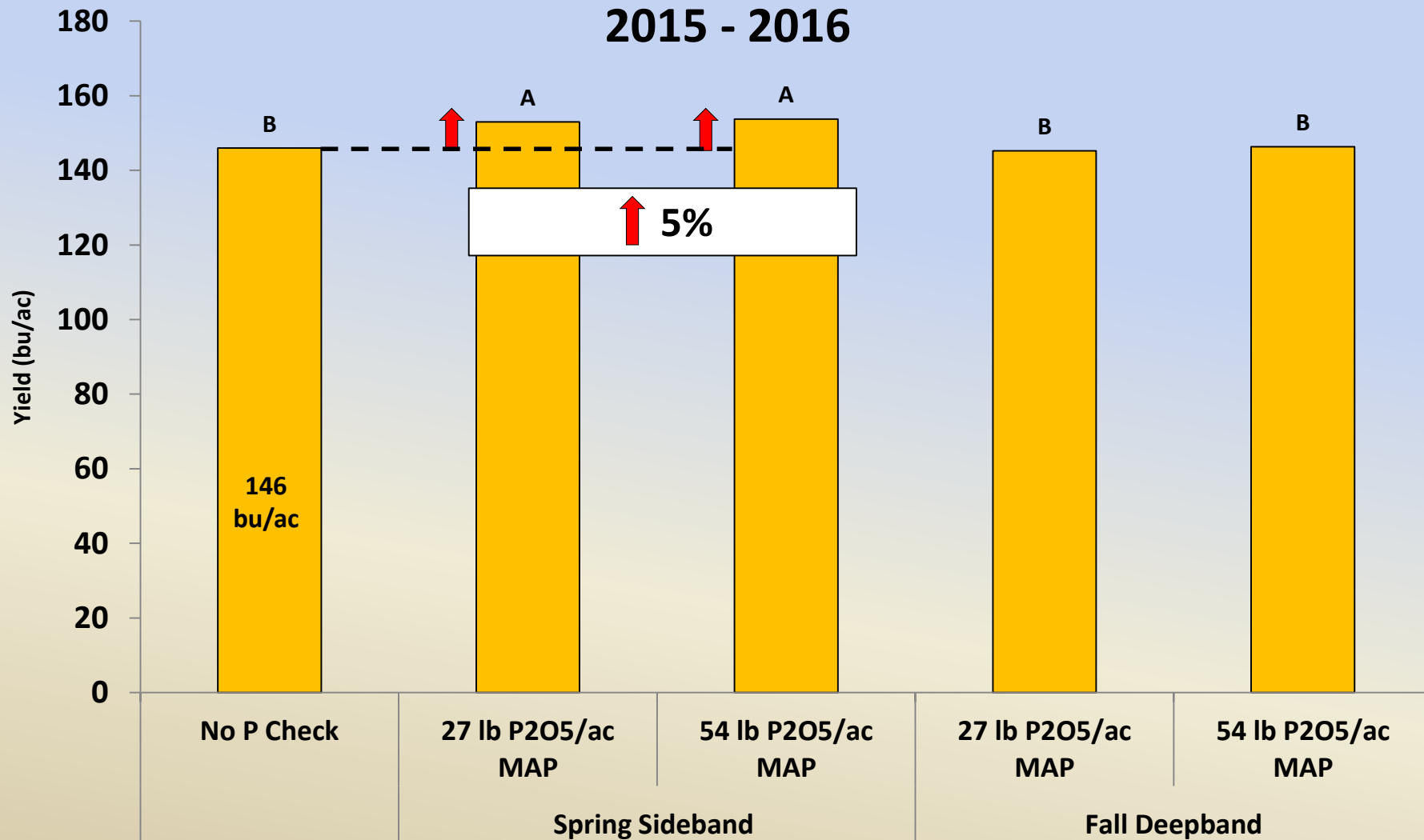




# Corn Strip Till Study

## Corn Grain Yield Response to P

### 2015 - 2016



# Manitoba Soybean P Study #1: Effects of P Fertilizer Rate & Placement on Plant Stand and Seed Yield



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# Manitoba Soybean P Study #1: Effects of P Fertilizer Rate & Placement

- Half of the sites tested 10 ppm or less for Olsen P (v. low-low)
- 3 rates of P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> (0, 40, 80) applied as MAP in SR, SB, or B'cast
- Opener type: knife or disc with row spacing from 7 to 12" (low SBU)

Site	Olsen P (ppm)			Soil Texture	Row Spacing	Seeder Opener
---	2013	2014	2015	----	Inches	Type
Roseisle	N/A	4 (VL)	4 (VL)	Sandy Loam	8	Knife
Melita	3 (VL)	5 (L)	7 (L)	Sandy Clay Loam	9.5	Knife
Brandon	5 (L)	6 (L)	5 (L)	Clay Loam	8	Knife
Carman	N/A	15 (H)	7 (L)	Sandy Clay Loam	8	Knife
Roblin	7 (L)	22 (VH)	8 (L)	Clay Loam	9	Knife
Beausejour	8 (L)	13 (M)	7 (L)	Heavy Clay	9	Disc
Arborg	14 (M)	22 (VH)	14 (M)	Silty Clay	9	Disc
St Adolphe	23 (VH)	25 (VH)	71 (VH)	Heavy Clay	7.3	Knife
Portage	34 (VH)	18 (H)	10 (L)	Clay Loam	12	Disc
Carberry	44 (VH)	11 (M)	15 (H)	Clay Loam	12	Disc

# Effect of P rate and placement on soybean seed yield for 28 site years in Manitoba

	Year		
	2013	2014	2015
# Sites	8	10	10
Mean Seed Yield (bu/ac)	46	42	51
Control Seed Yield (bu/ac)	23 - 66	18 - 60	37 – 65
# Sites with Yield <u>Increase</u>	0	0	1*
# Sites with Yield <u>Decrease</u>	2**	0	0
Change in Yield	-29 to 36%	0	+15%

\* Seed yield increased by 40 and 80 lb P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>/ac at Roseisle 2015

\*\* Seed yield reduced by 80 lb P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>/ac seed-placed, at Melita and Carberry in 2013

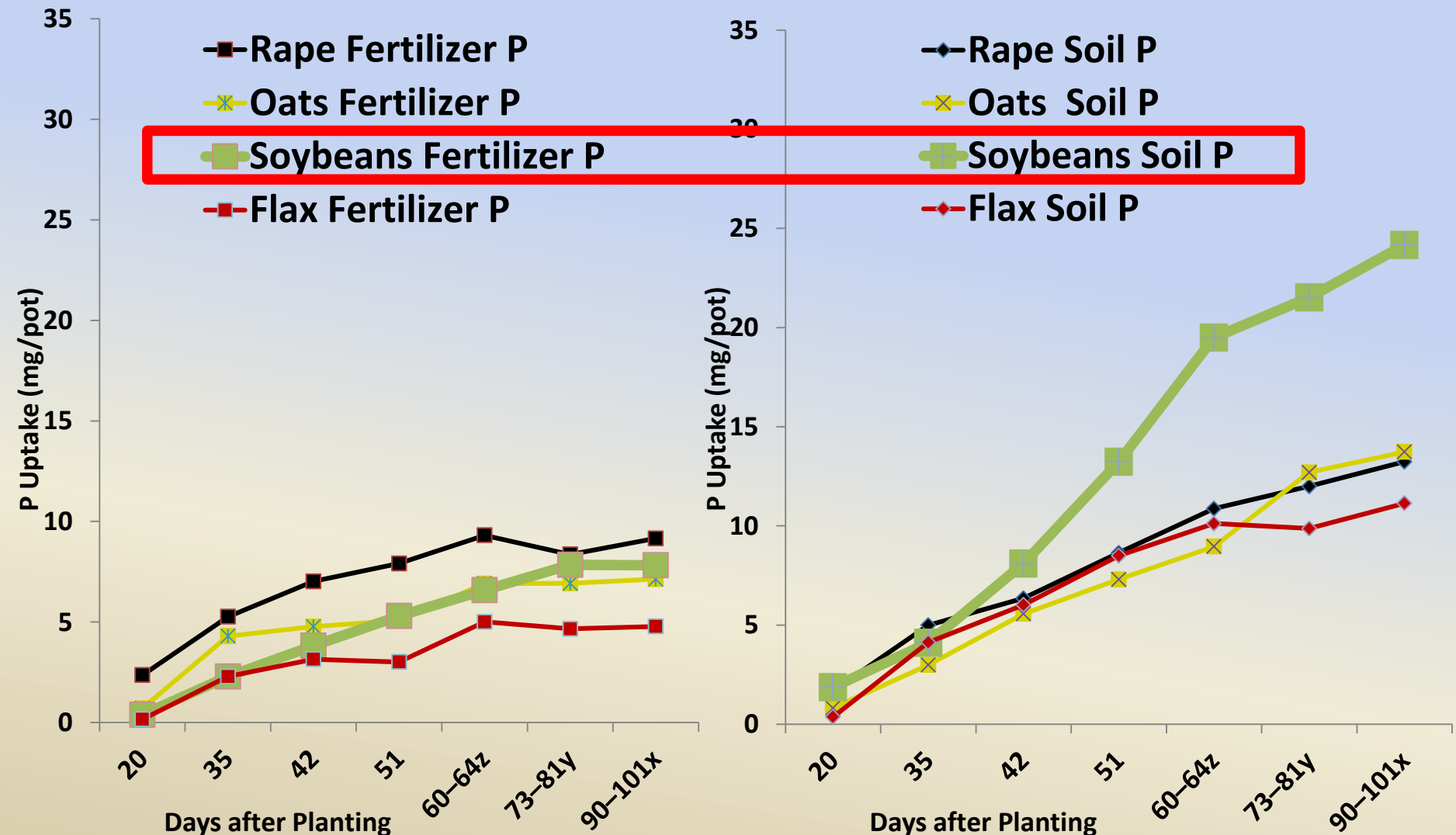


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# Why only 1 positive response to P in 28 site years?

## Soybeans are efficient feeders for soil P in Manitoba soils



(Kalra and Soper 1968)



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# Manitoba Soybean P Study #2:

## Soybean response to starter P fertilizer and soil P fertility from historic fertilization practices

- Located on three sites for a previous long term P fertilization trial that received 3 rates of MAP fertilizers applied each year, from 2002 until 2009, with total cumulative applications of 320, 640 and 1280 lbs  $P_2O_5$ /acre over the 8 year period

- No fertilizer P added from 2010-2012
- Soybean planted on the same sites in 2013, 2014, 2015

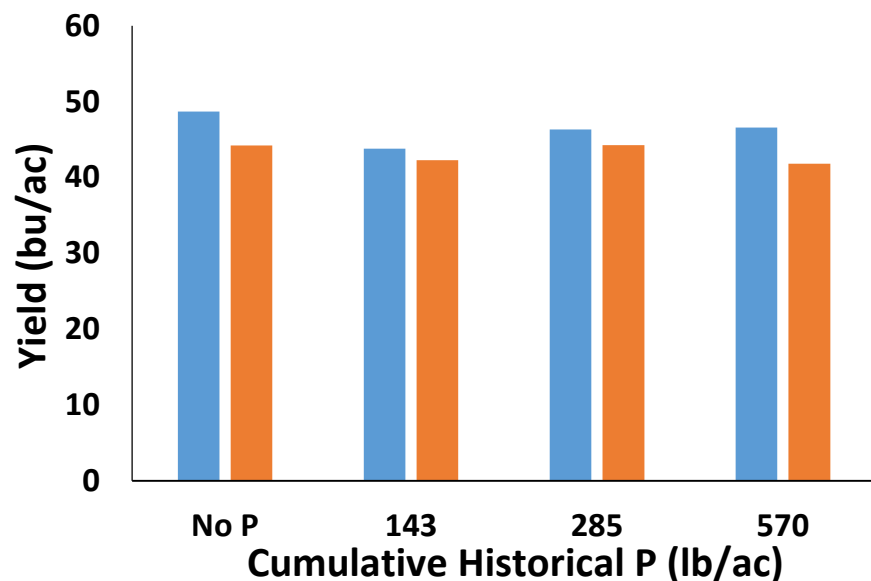
		Soil Test Olsen P (ppm)		
Historical P Applied (lb P/ac) (lb $P_2O_5$ /ac)		Brandon	Carman	Forrest
0	0	11	20	7
143	320	22	31	15
285	640	33	53	22
570	1280	54	91	40



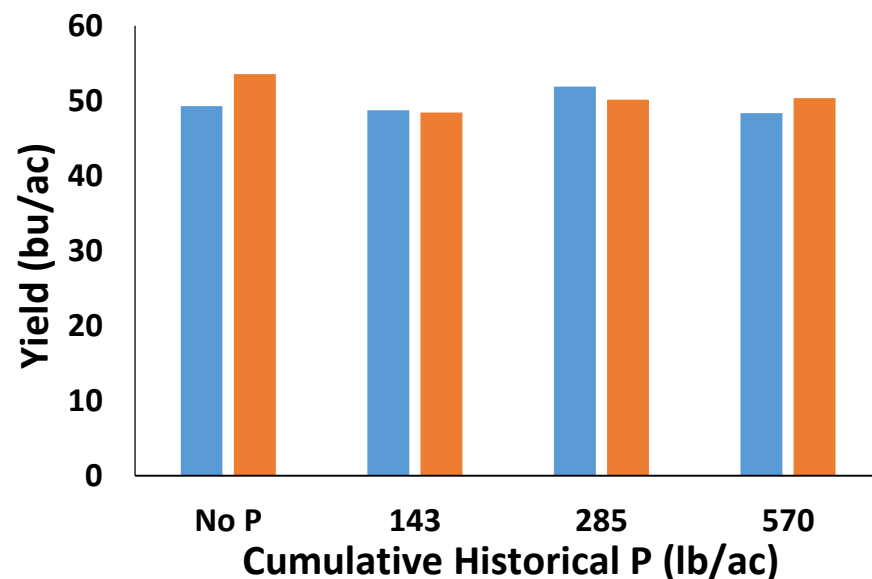
# Soybean Seed Yield 2013

- no yield response to starter P or historic P fertility

## Brandon 2013



## Forrest 2013



■ With side-banded starter P (18 lb/ac)  
■ Without starter P



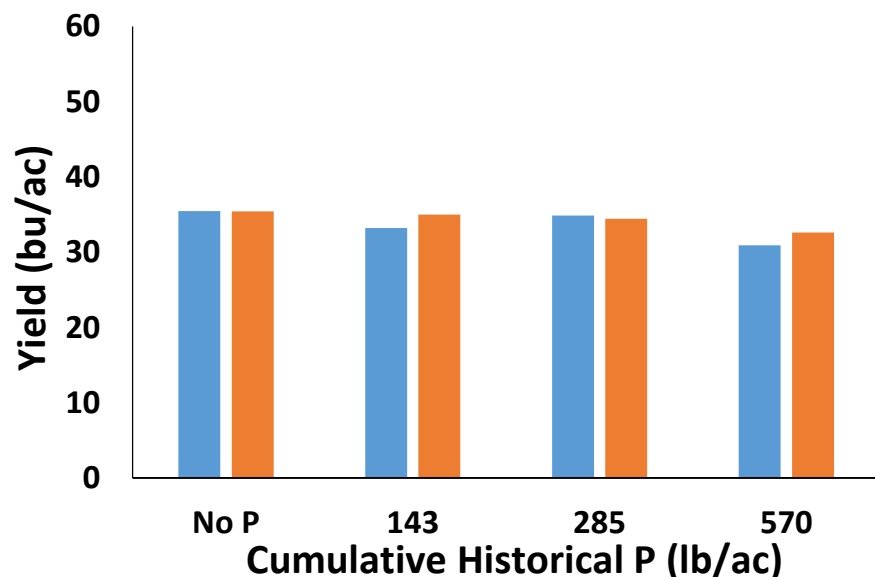
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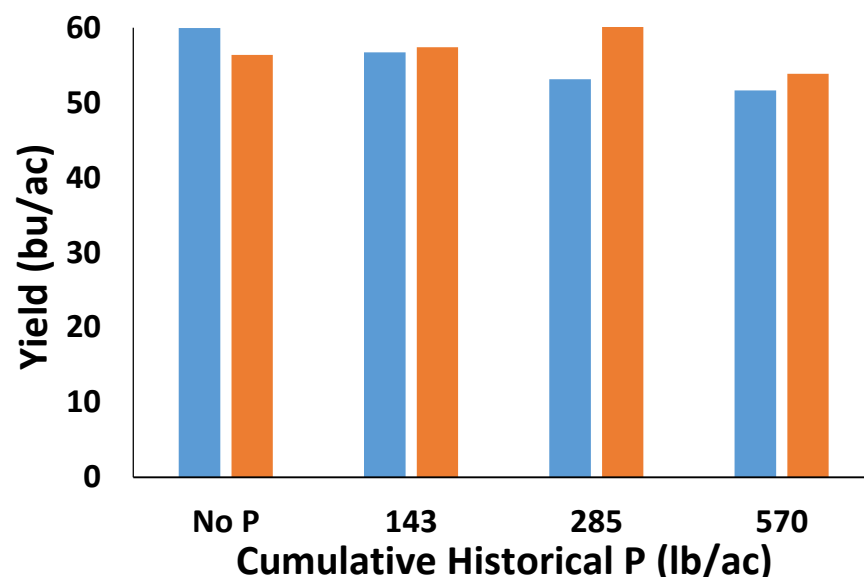
# Soybean Seed Yield 2014

- no yield response to starter P or historic P fertility

## Brandon 2014



## Carman 2014



- With side-banded starter P (18 lb/ac, for 2<sup>nd</sup> year)
- Without starter P

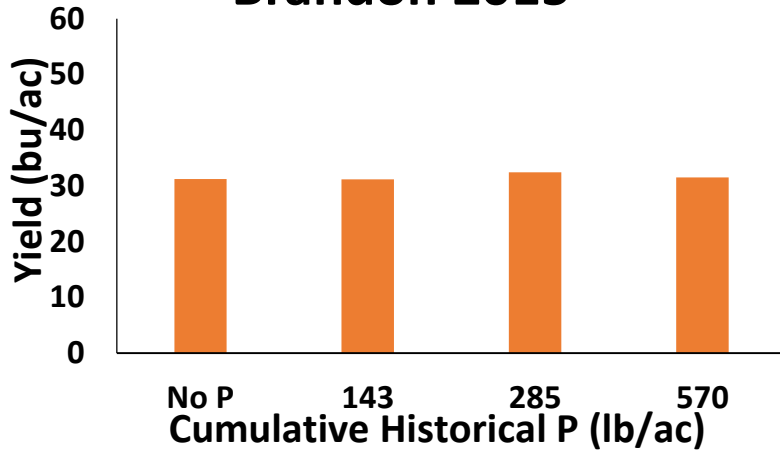


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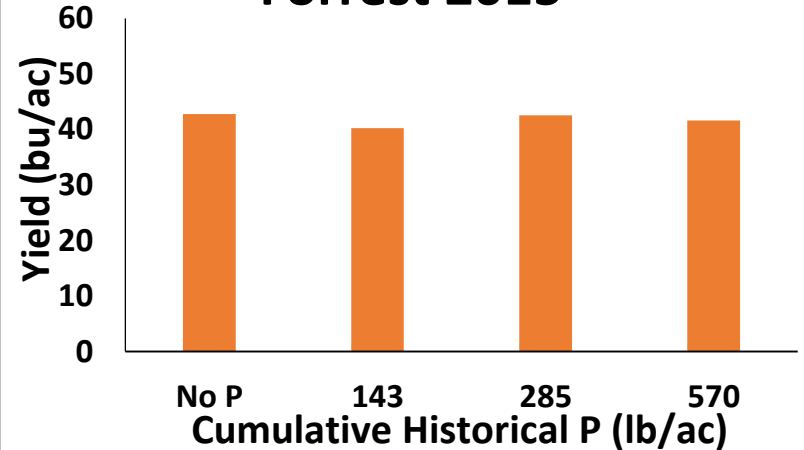
# Soybean Seed Yield 2015

- no yield response to historic P fertility

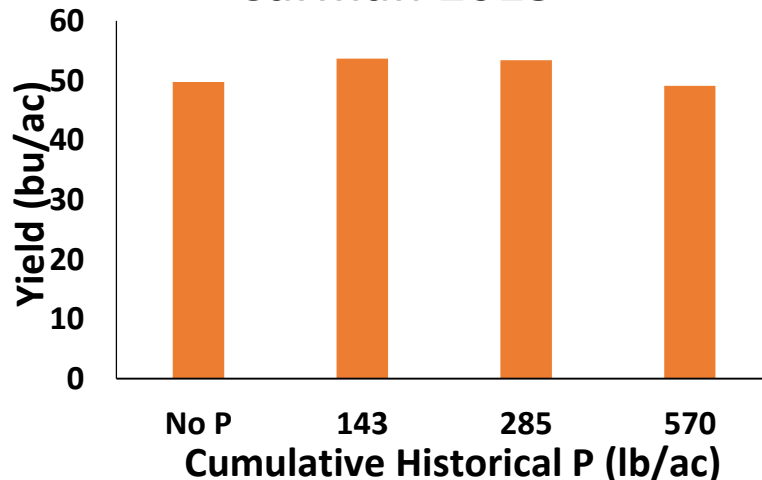
**Brandon 2015**



**Forrest 2015**



**Carman 2015**

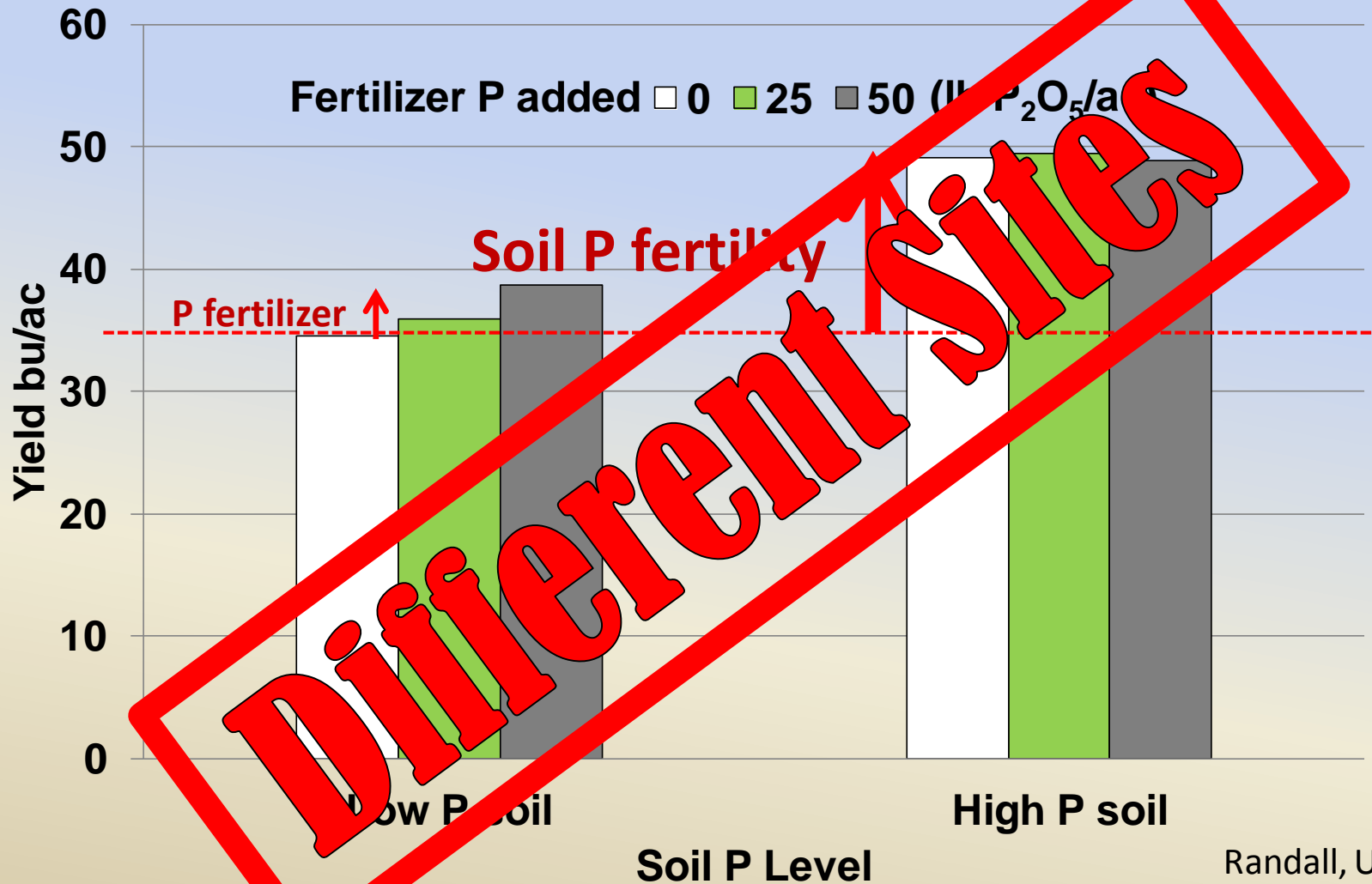


# **Summary and Conclusions for Manitoba Soybean P Study #2**

- **The soil test threshold for soybean yield responses to long term soil P fertility and/or P fertilizer appears to be very low in Manitoba soils, lower than those in the soils tested so far (7, 11 & 20 ppm Olsen P)**
- **Observations of higher soybean yields on soils with higher P fertility (e.g., manured soils) may be due to other factors**



In Minnesota research, soybean response to soil P fertility was greater than to P fertilizer



Randall, U of Mn



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# Soybeans may not “care” about P fertilizer, but what about the crop after soybeans?

The phosphorus deficit hangover ...

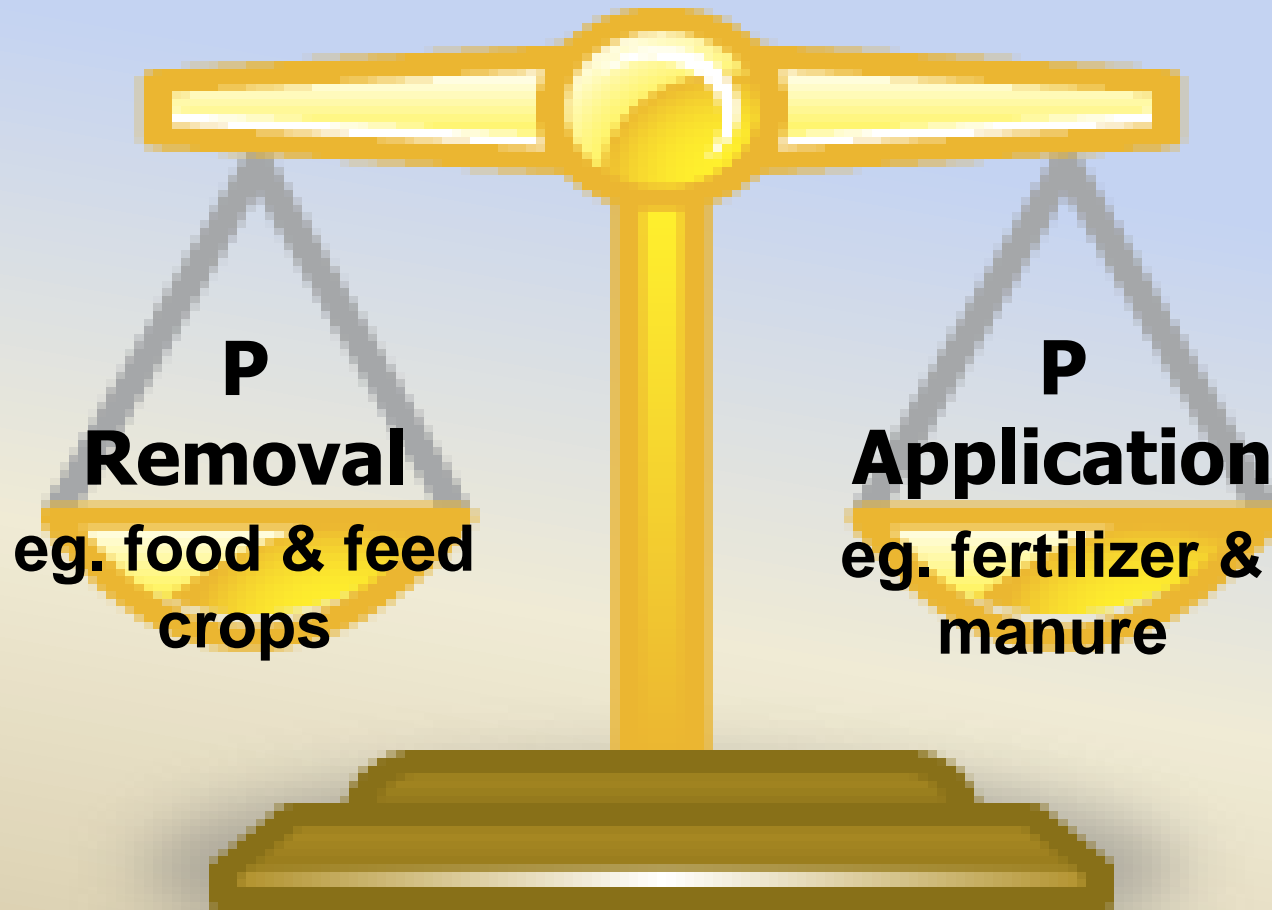


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**Balancing P application with crop removal  
is essential to avoid excessive  
accumulation or depletion of P in soil**



# P Removal by Annual Crops

Crop	Yield	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> Removed by Crop	
	Level/Acre	lb/ac	lb/bu
Wheat	45 bu	36 (26)*	0.59
Canola	45 bu	75 (46)	1.0
Soybeans	40 bu	43 (34)	0.85
Barley	80 bu	45 (34)	0.43
Peas	50 bu	43 (34)	0.68
Oats	100 bu	41 (26)	0.26
Corn	100 bu	63 (44)	0.44

\*Removed in grain, only



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### Percent of Samples Testing Below Critical Levels for P in 2015





**Clayton Harder's canola field, north of Wpg.  
With and Without 40 lbs  $P_2O_5$  + 12 lbs S/acre**



**Photo: Clayton Harder**



# Dr. Martin Entz's long term organic rotation at U of MB demonstrates the importance of P replacement



**Alfalfa no compost (P)**

**Alfalfa + compost (P)**



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# Effect of legume green manures on long term wheat yields in SK

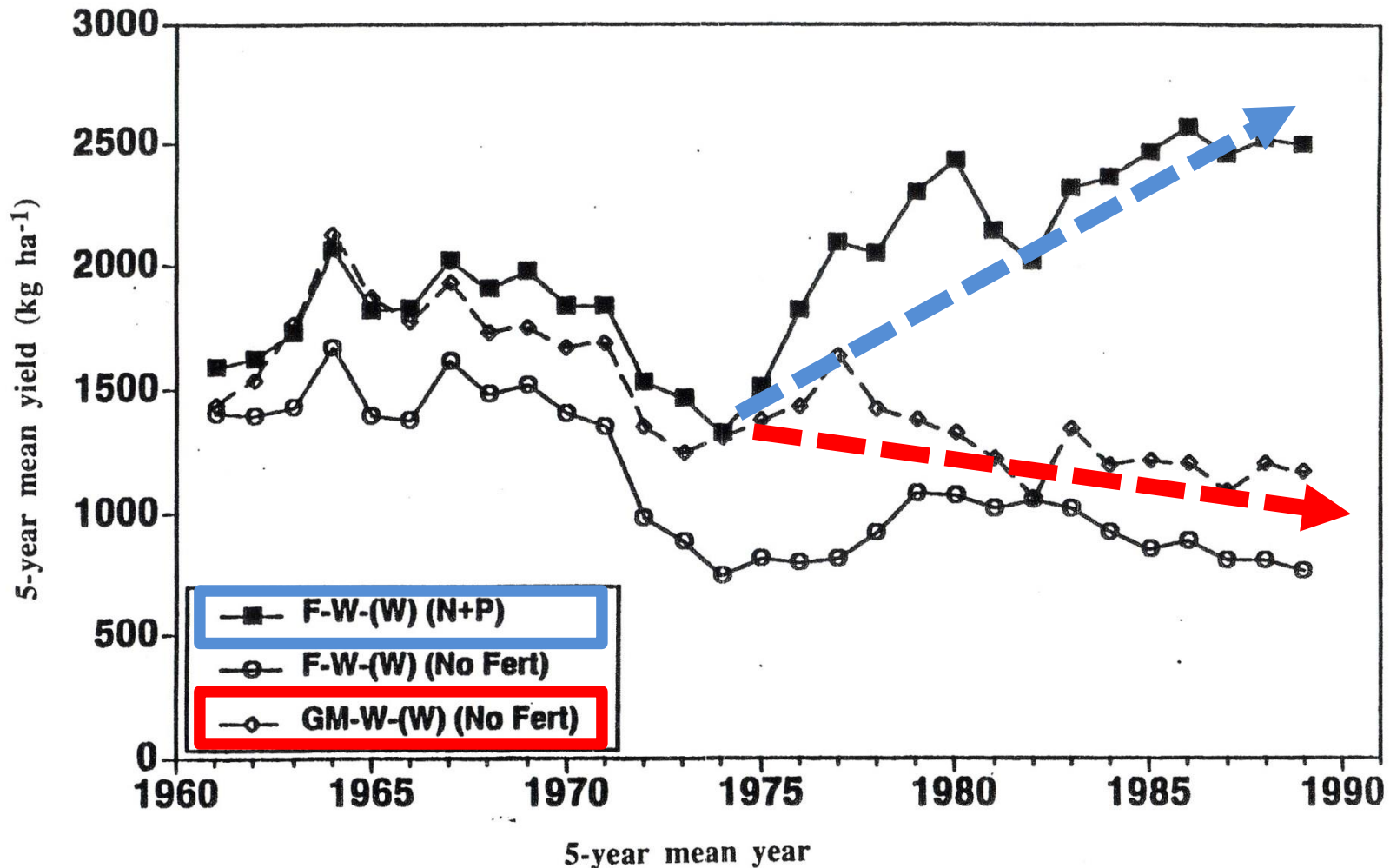
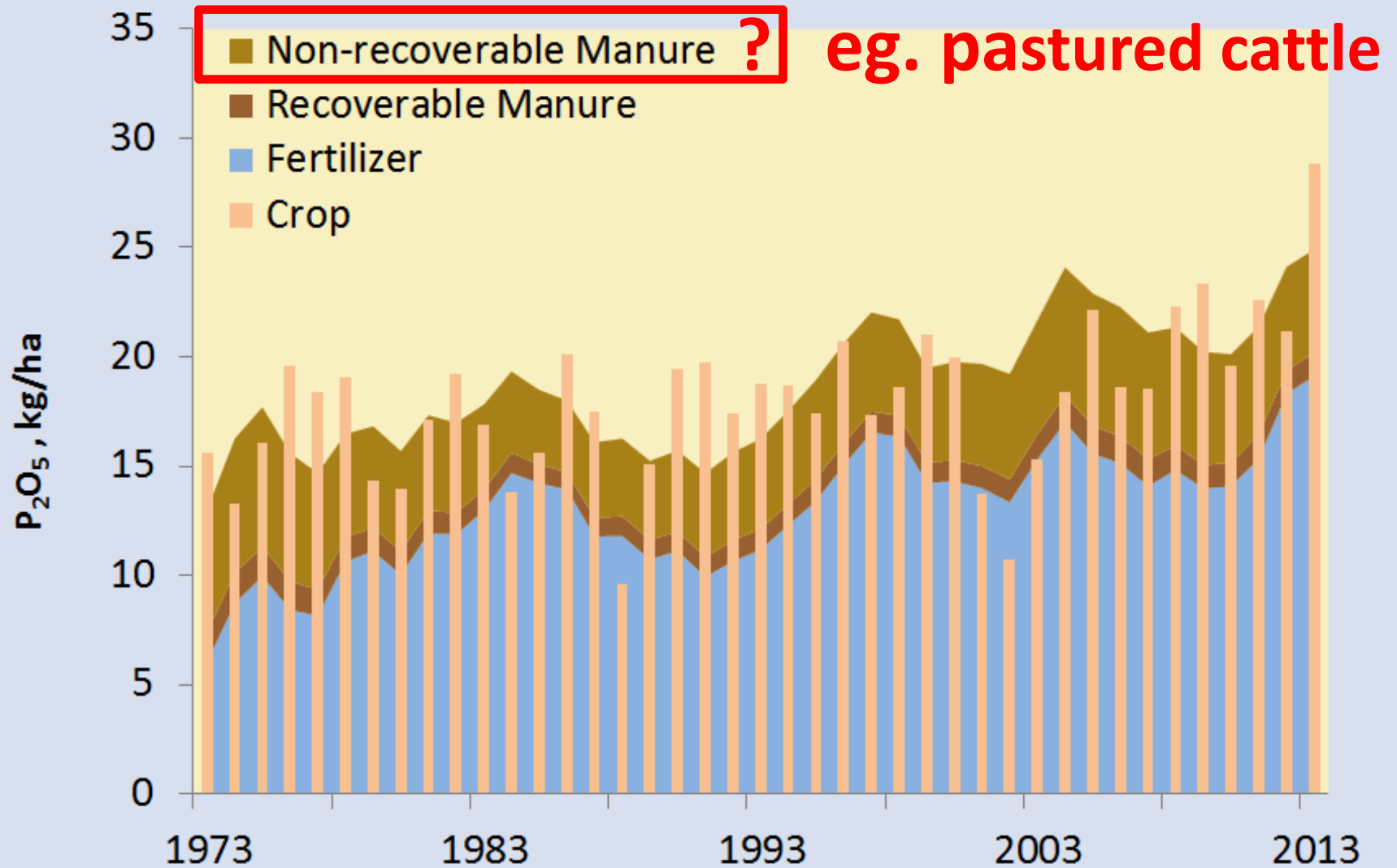


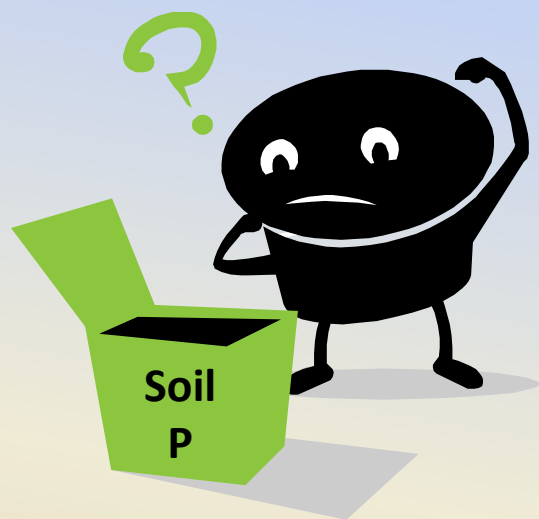
Figure 1. Yields of stubble wheat crops in fallow-wheat-wheat (F-W-W), fallow-wheat-wheat plus fertilizer (F-W-W (N+P)) and green manure-wheat-wheat (GM-W-W) rotations at Indian Head (Black soil zone) (C.A. Campbell, unpublished data).

# Saskatchewan Cropland Phosphorus Balance





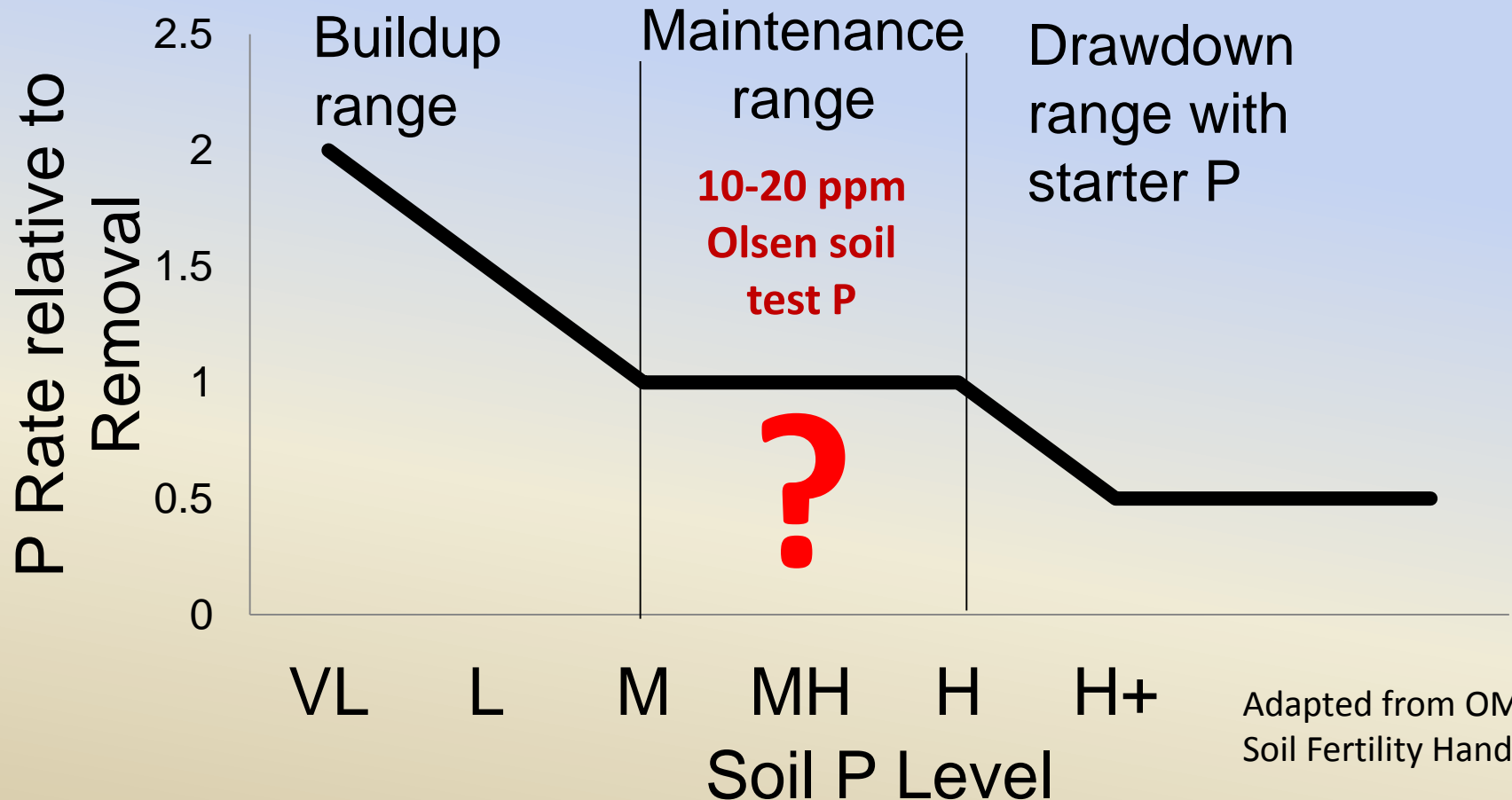
# **Manitoba's new recommendation for P fertil'n strategy: Phosphorus balance should be managed through the rotation ... not just on a single crop basis**



- **What is the current soil P level?**
  - **If excess, can draw down by using only starter P**
  - **If near optimum, can balance input and removal**
  - **If low, may want to build by applying fertilizer or manure P in excess of crop removal**



# A fertilization concept to move soil P levels into an optimum range over time



Adapted from OMAFRA  
Soil Fertility Handbook



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Phosphorus Fertiliza

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www.manitobapulse.ca/production-resources/phosphorus-fertilization-strategies/

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## Phosphorus Fertilization Strategies

**Did you know?** Soybeans remove 0.84 lbs P per bushel, which means a 40 bu/ac. soybean crop removes 34 lbs P/ac. Attention must be paid to ensure a proper fertilization strategy is adopted to ensure application rates are meeting removal rates through the entire crop rotation – learn more below.

**Manitoba fertilizer phosphorus (P) guidelines have not been updated since 1992 and some troubling trends have been identified:**

- In several of the past years the crop removal of P has surpassed the application rate of fertilizer P
- More soil test values are declining into the LOW range in some areas of Manitoba

This decline in soil test P levels (STP) may arise for a number of reasons:

- Changing crop acreages– from relatively low P removal crops of cereals and flax to canola, soybeans and corn
- Move to low disturbance seeders and planters with narrow openers and wide row spacings (low seedbed utilization) which limit the safe rate of seed row applied fertilizer, especially with sensitive crops such as canola and soybeans
- Promotion and adoption of low P rate starter fertilizers that do not replace P that is removed by crops
- Increase in grain yields since development of original MAFRD recommendations in the early 1990s due to breeding (ie introduction of hybrid canola, general purpose spring wheats etc.) and technology (ie fungicide use)
- Provincial recommendation tables do not include yield adjustment factors, so rates have been inadequate to meet current yield levels, let alone match rates of P removal



*Thinking about your cropping system, or that your client, does P applied equal P removed? Or are crop removal rates exceeding P applied, leading to a negative soil P balance? Use the [Interactive Phosphorus Balance Calculator](#) to determine your annual P balance:*

[Interactive Phosphorus Fertilization Calculator](#)

[Phosphorus Recommendation Strategies for Manitoba](#)

Manitoba Soil Fertility experts have collaborated to develop “Phosphorus Fertilization Strategies for Long Term Agronomic and Environmental Sustainability” which outlines



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P fert'n for rotation interactive v4.xlsx - Microsoft Excel

File Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Acrobat

Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles

Calibri 11 A<sup>+</sup> A<sup>-</sup> Wrap Text Merge & Center

General Normal Bad Good Neutral Calculation Check Cell

K19

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1		<b>Phosphorus Balance Calculation for a Rotation (Version 4 - October 1, 2014)</b>											
2		<b>Crop</b>	<b>Typical Yield</b>	<b>Yield Units</b>	<b>P Applied</b>	<b>P Removed* per unit</b>	<b>P Removed* per acre</b>	<b>Annual Balance</b>	<b>Notes: Does not account for nutrients removed when straw or chaff is removed or burned</b>				
3					----- (lb P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> /ac) -----								
4		HR Spring wheat	60	bu/ac	30	0.59	35	-5					
5		Winter wheat	75	bu/ac	30	0.51	38	-8					
6		Barley		bu/ac		0.42	0	0					
7		Oats		bu/ac		0.26	0	0					
8		Canola	40	bu/ac	20	1.04	42	-22					
9		Soybeans	40	bu/ac	10	0.84	34	-24					
10		Peas		bu/ac		0.69	0	0					
11		Flax		bu/ac		0.65	0	0					
12		Corn (grain)		bu/ac		0.44	0	0					
13		Other**				0.00	0	0					
14		<b>Total for Rotation</b>			90		149	-59					
15													
16		Fill in any of the blue cells for typical rotation, yields, and P appl'n											
17		*P removal figures are estimates from the Manitoba Soil Fertility Guide.											
18		**For nutrient removal in other crops see table in next worksheet.											
19													
20													

Interactive P balance worksheet Nutrient removal table

Ready

Windows Taskbar: Universit..., Phospho..., C:\Users\..., C:\Users\..., C:\Users\..., C:\Users\..., Inbox - ..., Cowell P..., 0630 3C ..., Microsoft...



# P sufficiency strategy for short term (fertilizing for optimum economic responses in first year after application) often decreases P fertility for long term

Appendix Table 17. Phosphorus recommendations for field crops based on soil test levels and placement<sup>76</sup>.

FERTILIZER PHOSPHATE (P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> ) RECOMMENDED (lb/ac)																
Soil Phosphorus (sodium bicarbonate or Olsen P test)			Cereal	Corn Sunflower	Canola Mustard	Flax	Buckwheat Fababeans	beans	Potatoes		Peas Field beans <sup>1</sup> Soybeans <sup>1</sup>	Legume forages	Perennial grass forages			
ppm	lb/ac	Rating	S <sup>1</sup>	Sb <sup>2</sup>	B <sup>3</sup>	S <sup>1</sup>	B <sup>3</sup>	S <sup>1</sup>	B <sup>3</sup>	PPI <sup>4</sup>	B <sup>3</sup>	S <sup>1</sup>	seeding PPI <sup>5</sup>	Est. stand BT <sup>6</sup>	seeding PPI <sup>5</sup>	Est. stand BT <sup>6</sup>
0	0	VL	40	40	40	20	40	20	55	110	40	20	75	55	45	30
	5	VL	40	40	40	20	40	20	55	110	40	20	75	55	45	30
5	10	L	40	40	40	20	40	20	50	100	40	15	75	55	45	30
	15	L	35	35	35	20	35	20	45	90	35	15	65	50	35	20
10	20	M	30	30	30	20	30	20	45	90	30	10	60	40	30	20
	25	M	20	20	20	20	20	20	40	80	20	10	50	35	20	15
15	30	H	15	15	15	0	15	20	35	70	15	0	45	30	15	10
	35	H	10	10	10	0	10	20	30	60	10	0	30	20	0	0
20	40	VH	10	10	10	0	10	20	30	60	10	0	30	20	0	0
20+	40+	VH+	10	10	10	0	10	20	30	60	10	0	25	20	0	0

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COVERING NEW GROUND  
Sustainable Agriculture Technology Solutions

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# Rotational Fertilization Strategies for P Balance Based on MB SFG Rec. for 10 ppm Olsen P

## Annual & Overall P Balance for P Strategies in 4 Year Rotation

Crop	Yield (bu/ac)	Max N-Based P Maint. MB Seed Manure with SFG Row P in 1st yr Sideband			
		----- (lb P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> /ac) -----			
GP spring wheat	60	-5			
Canola	40	-20			
Winter wheat	75	-8			
Soybeans	35	-20			
4 Year Total		-53			

\* Using values of 0.59, 1.0, 0.51, 0.85 lb P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>/bu respectively for grain only



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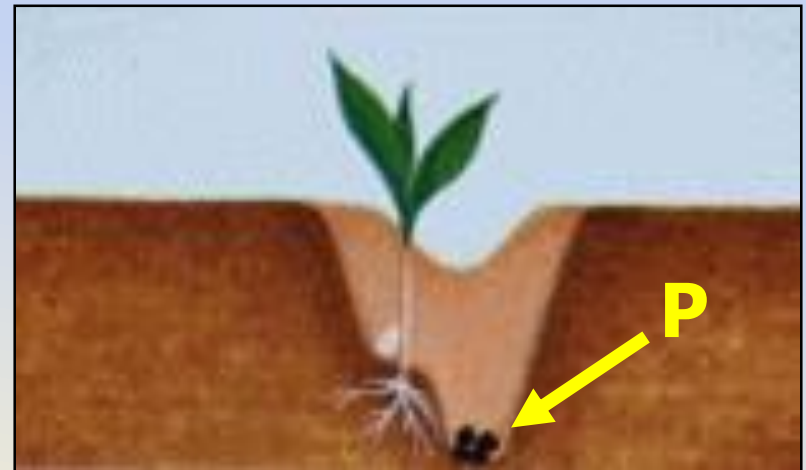
# Why not simply broadcast P?



**Almost all fertilizer P in the Canadian Prairies is banded under soil surface, in or near seed, at planting**

**Agronomically beneficial,  
especially in cold soils in  
areas with short growing  
season**

**Environmentally beneficial  
because P placed under  
soil surface after spring  
snowmelt runoff**





**Broadcasting P fertilizer, especially in conservation tillage systems leaves water soluble P on the soil surface ... prone to runoff ... especially if applied in fall**



**An invitation to regulation ...**



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# Why is phosphorus balance important?

**Food** - P is a unique element that is essential for almost all life



Source: Christiansen/  
Scientific American

**Water** - small amounts of excess P cause big problems with water quality



Photo: MB Conservation



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# Main Problem: Excess P and “Algae”

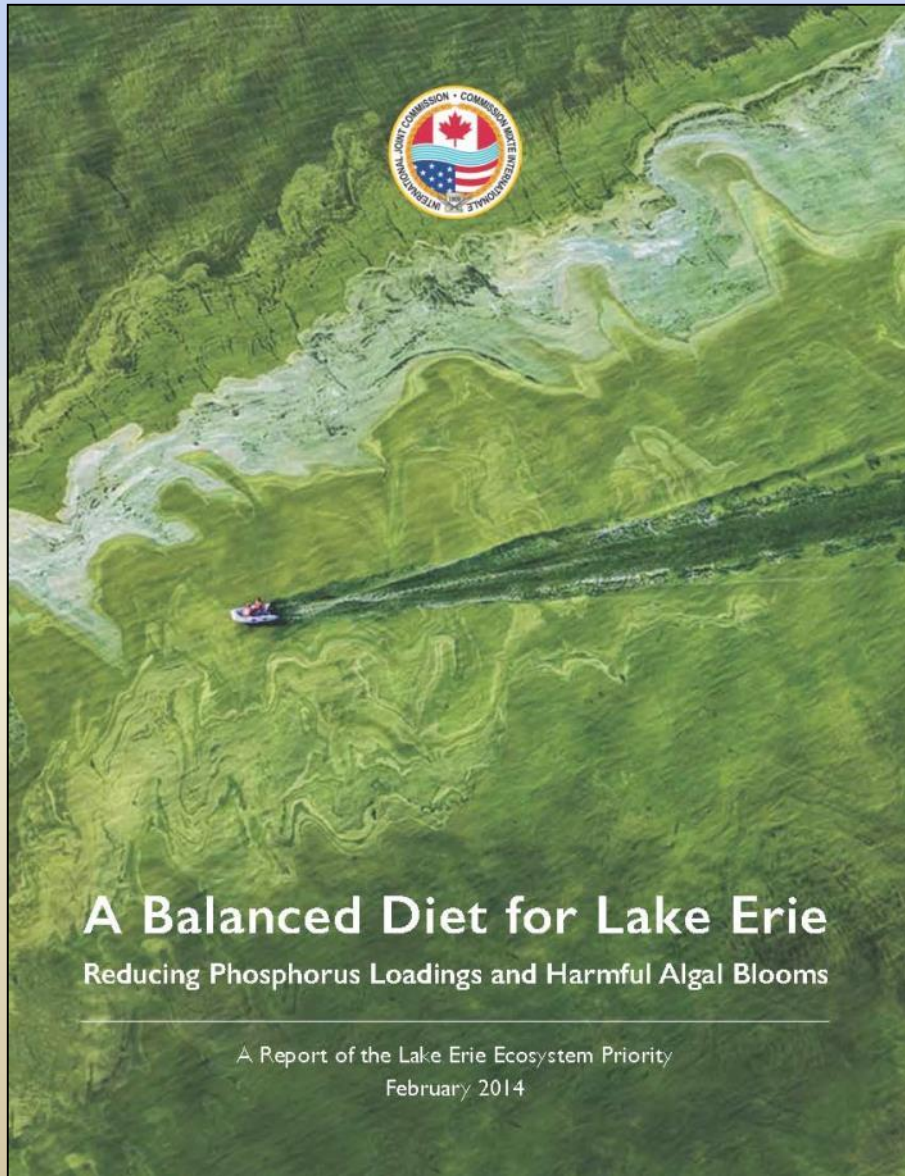
“Eutrophication” occurs at very low conc’ns of P (20-50 ppb):

- Blue-green “algae” (cyanobacteria)
- Oxygen Depletion
  - Fish kills
- Nerve and Liver Toxins
  - Livestock & wildlife mainly at risk





# International Joint Commission Report on Improving Water Quality in Lake Erie – February 2014



**“The control of phosphorus in agricultural operations must focus on changes in agricultural practices that have been implemented in recent decades, such as increased prevalence of fall application of nutrients, applying two years’ worth of fertilizer in a single application, and broadcast application.”**

*page 7 of International Joint Commission (2014).  
A Balanced Diet for Lake Erie: Reducing  
Phosphorus Loadings and Harmful Algal  
Blooms. Report of the Lake Erie Ecosystem  
Priority.*



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# Excess P & toxic blue-green algae in Lake Erie shuts down water supply to Toledo, Ohio – August 2014



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# Fertilizer Application Patterns and Trends and Their Implications for Water Quality in the Western Lake Erie Basin

February 2018



INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION • COMMISSION MIXTE INTERNATIONALE  
Canada and the United States Canada et États-Unis

p 31: “Kalcic et al. (2016) found that widespread use of multiple best management practices (BMPs), in particular subsurface fertilizer placement, would be needed to approach phosphorus reduction targets in the Western Lake Erie Basin.”

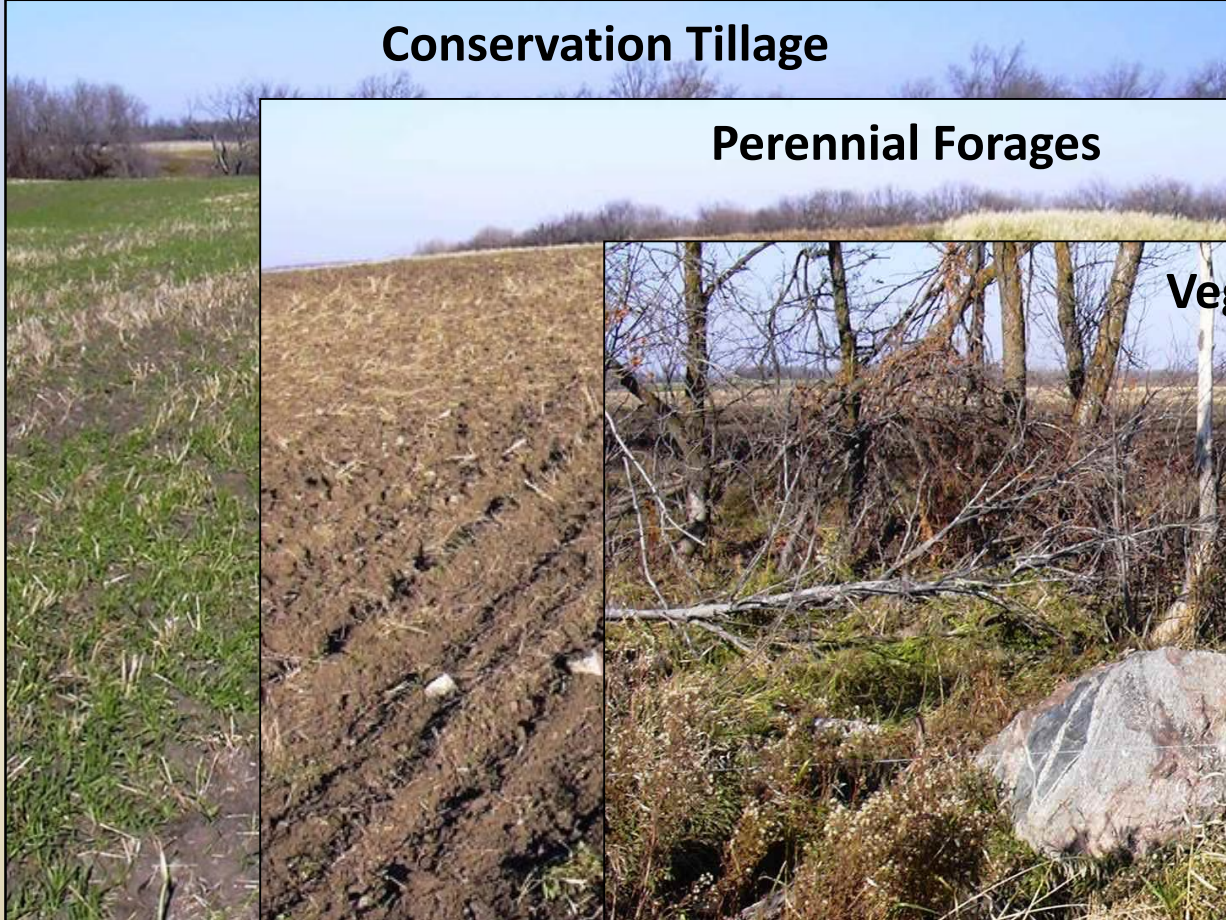


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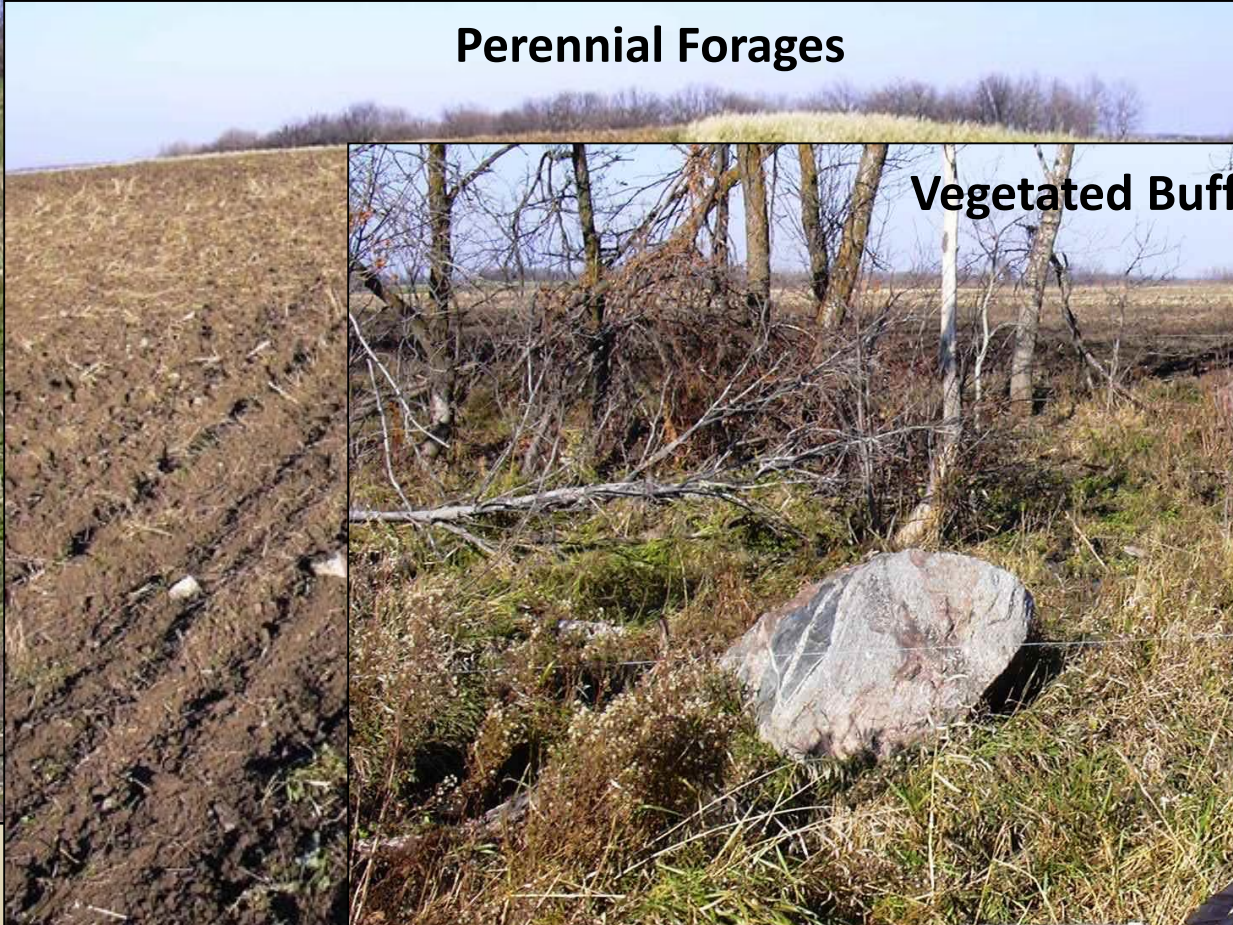


# Managing P loss with traditional soil and water conservation BMPs

**Conservation Tillage**



**Perennial Forages**



**Vegetated Buffers**





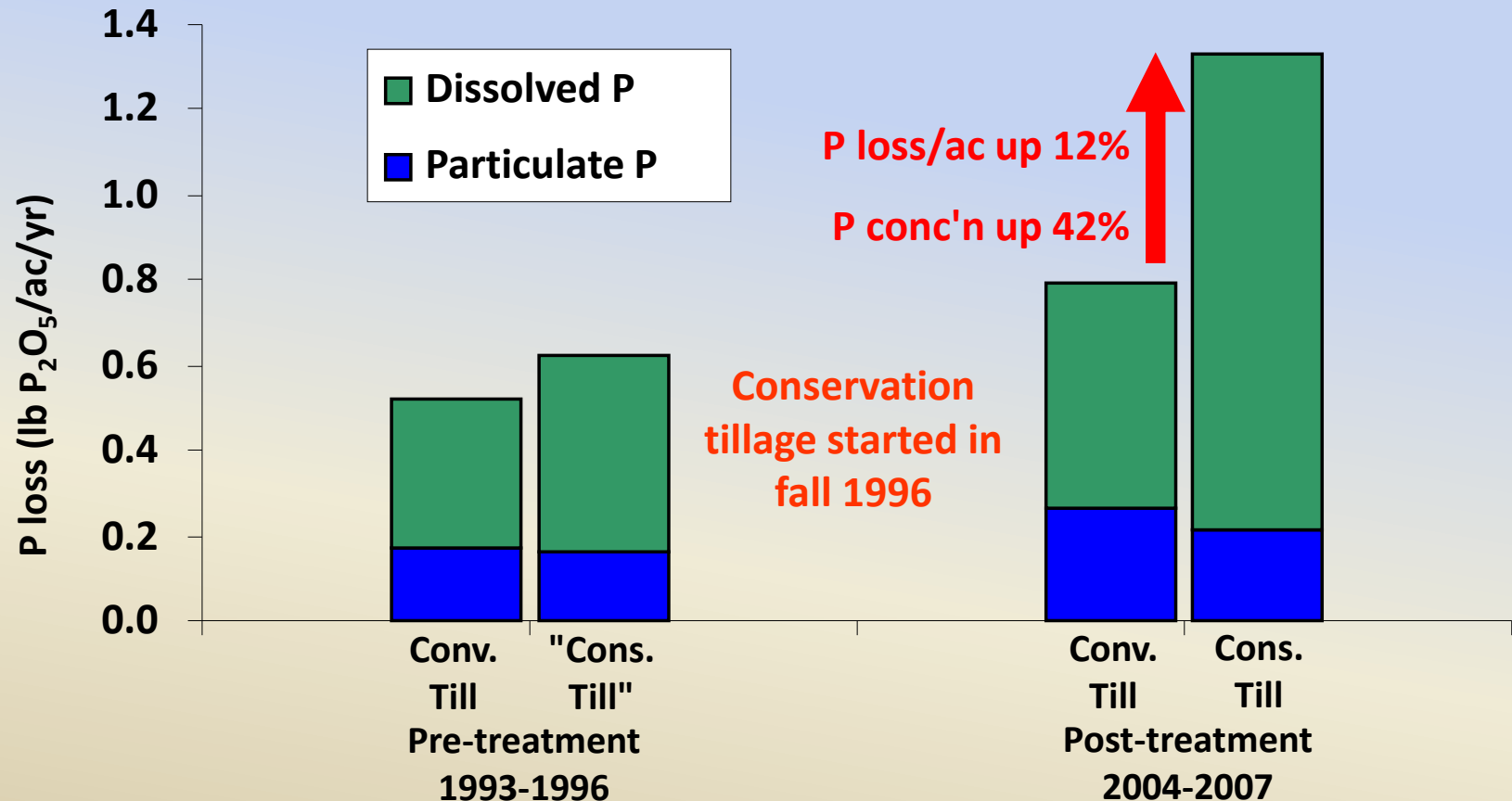


## Effects of conservation tillage on water quality in South Tobacco Creek watershed:

- ✓ decreased total nitrogen export by 68%
- ✓ decreased sediment export by 65%
- ✗ but P was a different story ...



**South Tobacco Creek twin watershed study:**  
**P loss from conservation tillage was greater than from conventional tillage ... because erosion of soil particles was a minor contributor to P loss in both systems**



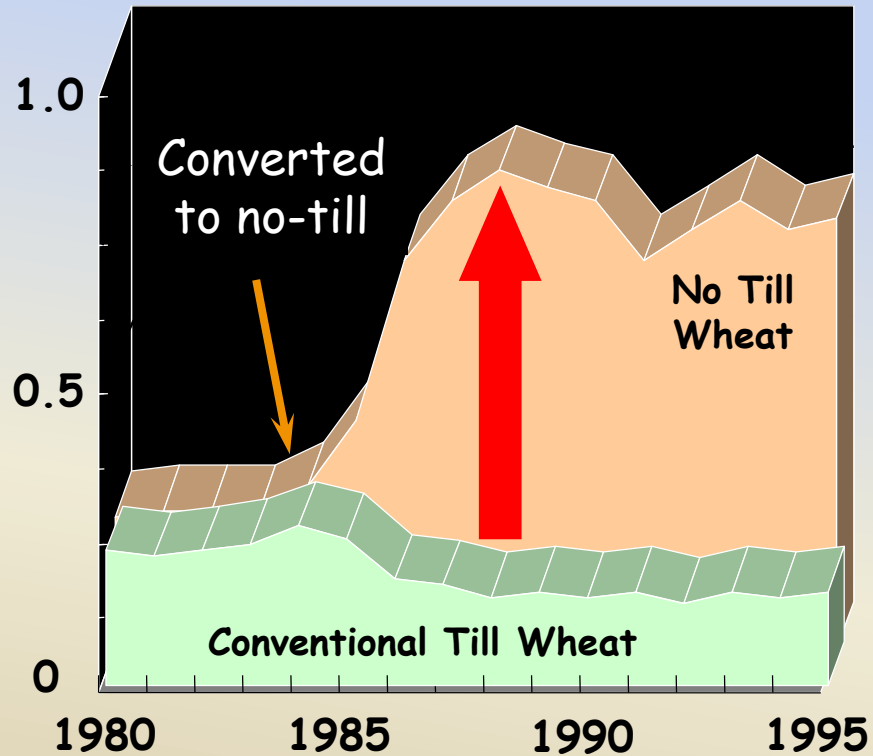
(Tiessen et al. JEQ 2010)



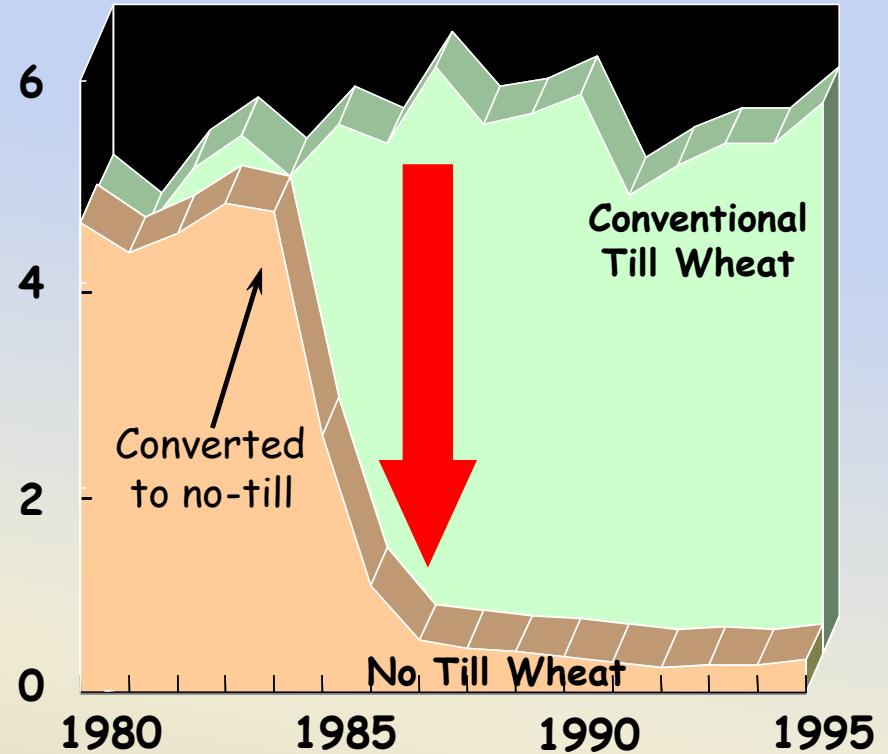
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**In Oklahoma, conservation tillage increased losses of dissolved P, but reduced total P loss from wheat by 95% ... where most of the P loss was by erosion**

**Dissolved P** mg/L



**Total P,** mg/L



El Reno, OK - Sharpley and Smith, 1994



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# Increased Soluble Phosphorus Loads to Lake Erie: Unintended Consequences of Conservation Practices?

Helen P. Jarvie,\* Laura T. Johnson, Andrew N. Sharpley, Douglas R. Smith, David B. Baker, Tom W. Bruulsema, and Remegio Confesor

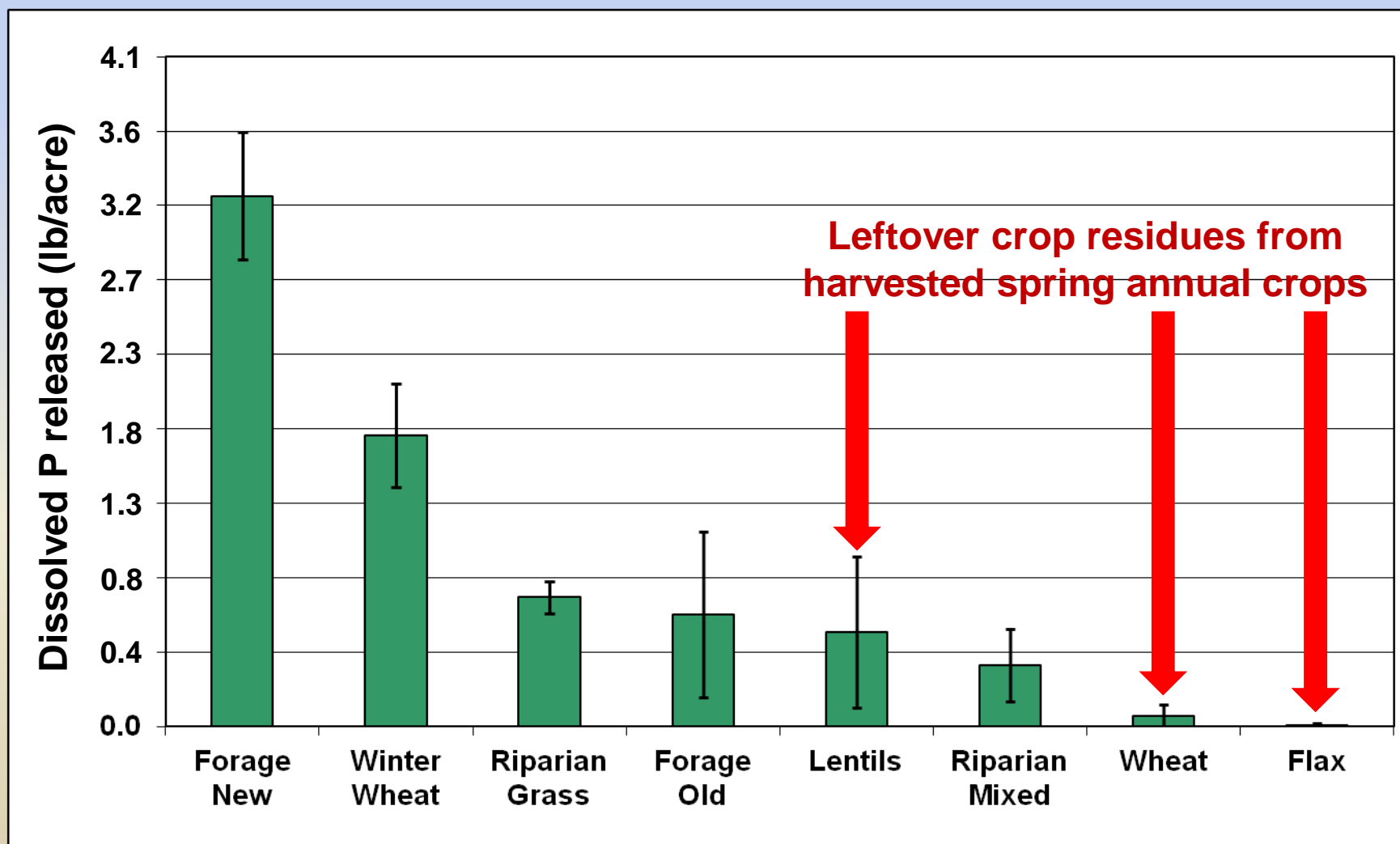
## Abstract

Cumulative daily load time series marked a step-change increase in phosphorus (SRP) loads entering from three major tributaries: the Rivers. These elevated SRP loads last 12 yr. Empirical regression of the contributions from (i) increased weather and precipitation pattern delivery (the combined effects of and/or increased transport efficiency fractions). Approximately 65% of 2002 was attributable to increased runoff volumes accounting for SRP delivery occurred concomitant P budgets. However, within these long-term, largescale changes in tillage to minimize erosion and particulate P loss, and increased tile drainage to improve field operations and profitability. These practices can inadvertently increase labile P fractions at the soil surface and transmission of soluble P via subsurface drainage. Our

**“Our findings suggest that changes in agricultural practices, including some conservation practices designed to reduce erosion and particulate P transport, may have had unintended, cumulative, and converging impacts contributing to the increased SRP loads, reaching a critical threshold around 2002.”**

Priority was established in response to growing challenges relating to phosphorus (P) enrichment, compounded by climate change, and aquatic invasive species (IJC, 2014); in February 2016, the governments of Canada and the United States announced new P

# Fresh frozen green plant residues at greatest risk for simulated snowmelt runoff P losses



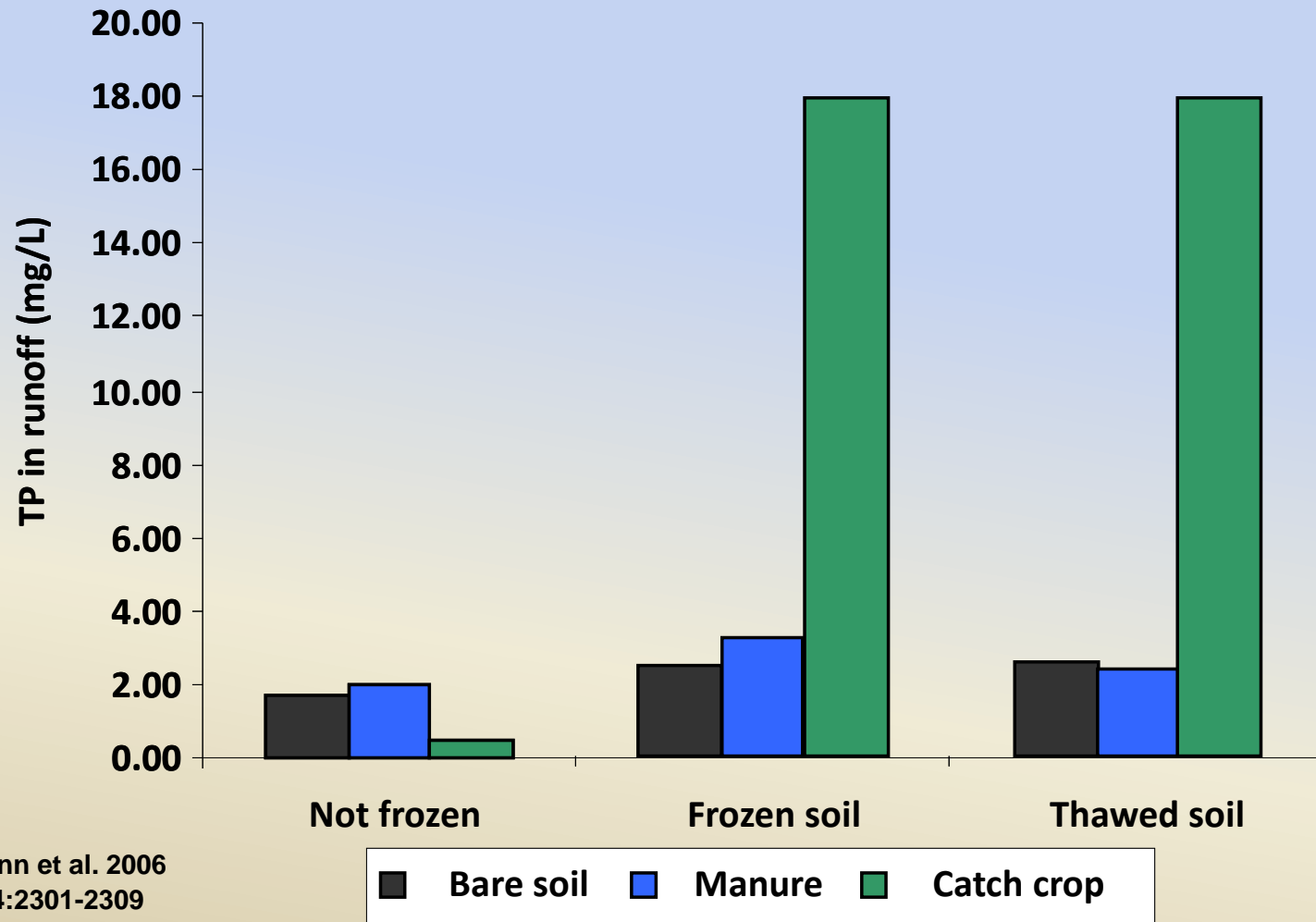
Elliott, J. 2013. Evaluating the potential contribution of vegetation as a nutrient source in snowmelt runoff. Can. J. Soil Sci. 93:435-443.



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# Freezing, thawing increases P loss from cover crops on manured soil: USDA rainfall simulation research in PA

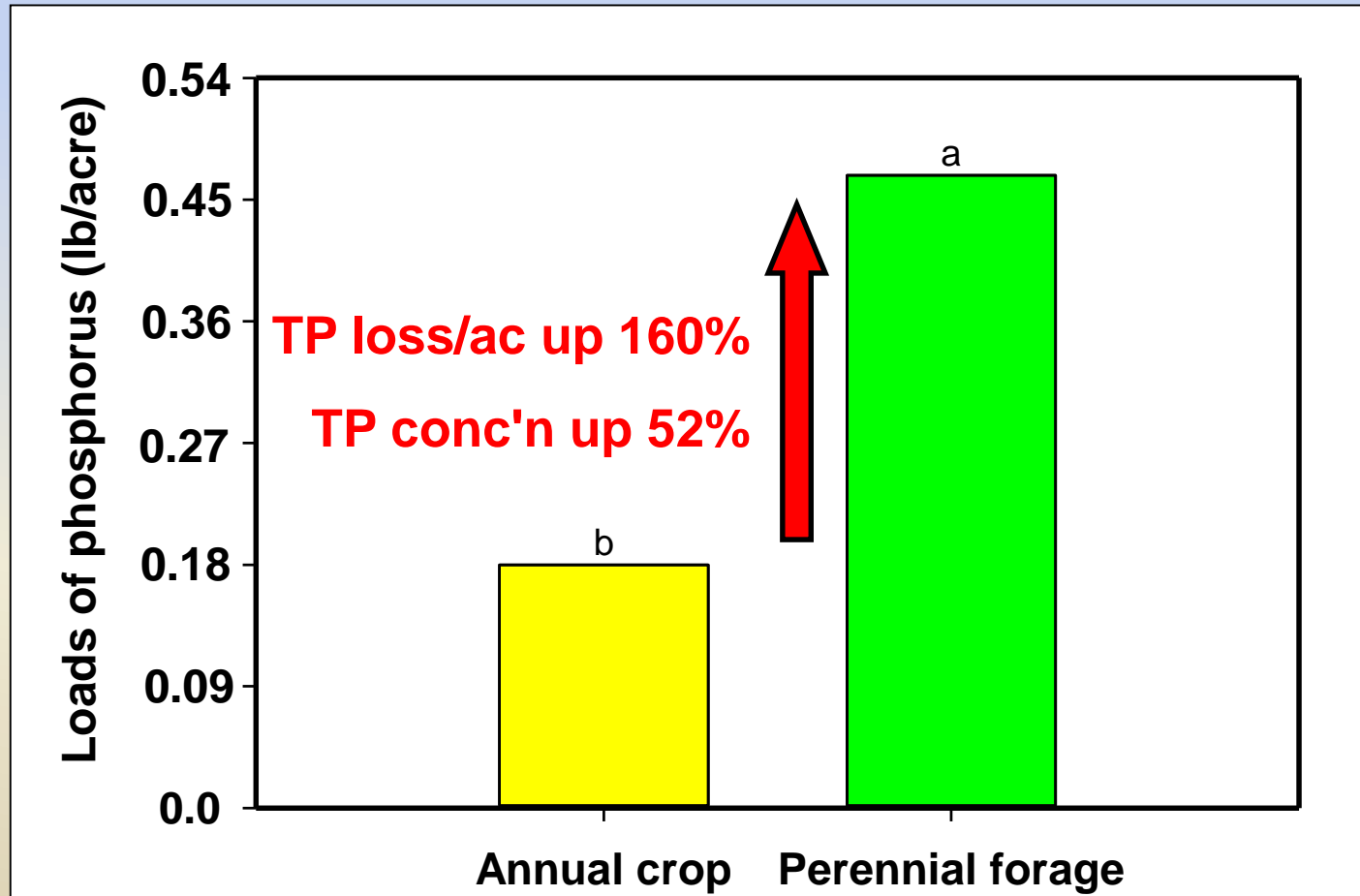


Bechmann et al. 2006  
JEQ 34:2301-2309



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# Perennial alfalfa forage loses 2.6 x as much P in snowmelt runoff as conventionally tilled annual crops (8 site years)



South Tobacco Creek Model Watershed – Liu et al. J. Environ. Qual. 43:1644–1655 (2014)

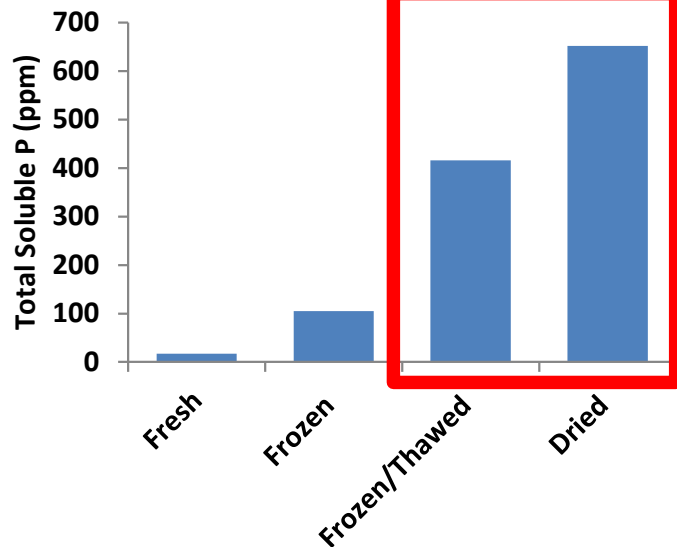


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# WI studies show that P losses from frozen or dried alfalfa under laboratory conditions did not match losses under field conditions

## Lab Study

Total Soluble P extracted from alfalfa  
Field #7 under laboratory conditions  
(Roberson & Bundy 2007)



“Actual P losses likely depend on the timing and extent of plant freezing and drying and of precipitation events after freezing.”

## Field Study

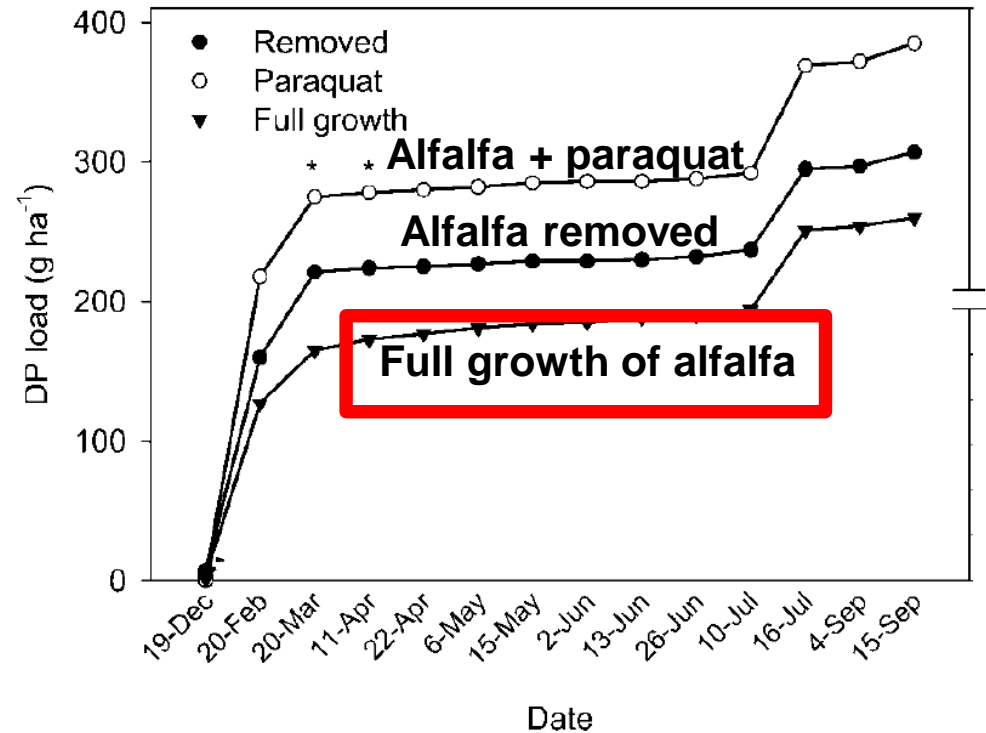


Fig. 4. Effect of fall cutting height and paraquat application to alfalfa (15 Oct. 2002) on cumulative dissolved reactive P (DP) (solid line) and natural runoff (dashed line) load at site 7, Oct. 2002 through Sept. 2003. (\*) Orthogonal comparison of full growth and paraquat treatment on cumulative DP load was significant at the 0.20 probability level. (Roberson and Bundy. JEQ 36:532–539 (2007))



# Vegetated buffer strips in Manitoba not as effective as expected

Sheppard et al. CJSS 2006 (SE MB)

- VBS reduced runoff [TP] in 50% of cases,
- increased P in 18%, had no effect in 32%
- overall average ... only 4% reduction in runoff [TP]

Sheppard et al. 2011 &

Habibiandehkordi et al. 2017

- No significant reduction in P with VBS in 45 of 54 seasonal measurements in Eastern-Interlake CD, Pembina Valley CD, and Little Sask. CD trials



Photo: Steve Sheppard



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# In-stream and near-stream processes (eg. vegetated buffers and biological uptake) are minimal during snowmelt



Photo: David Lobb



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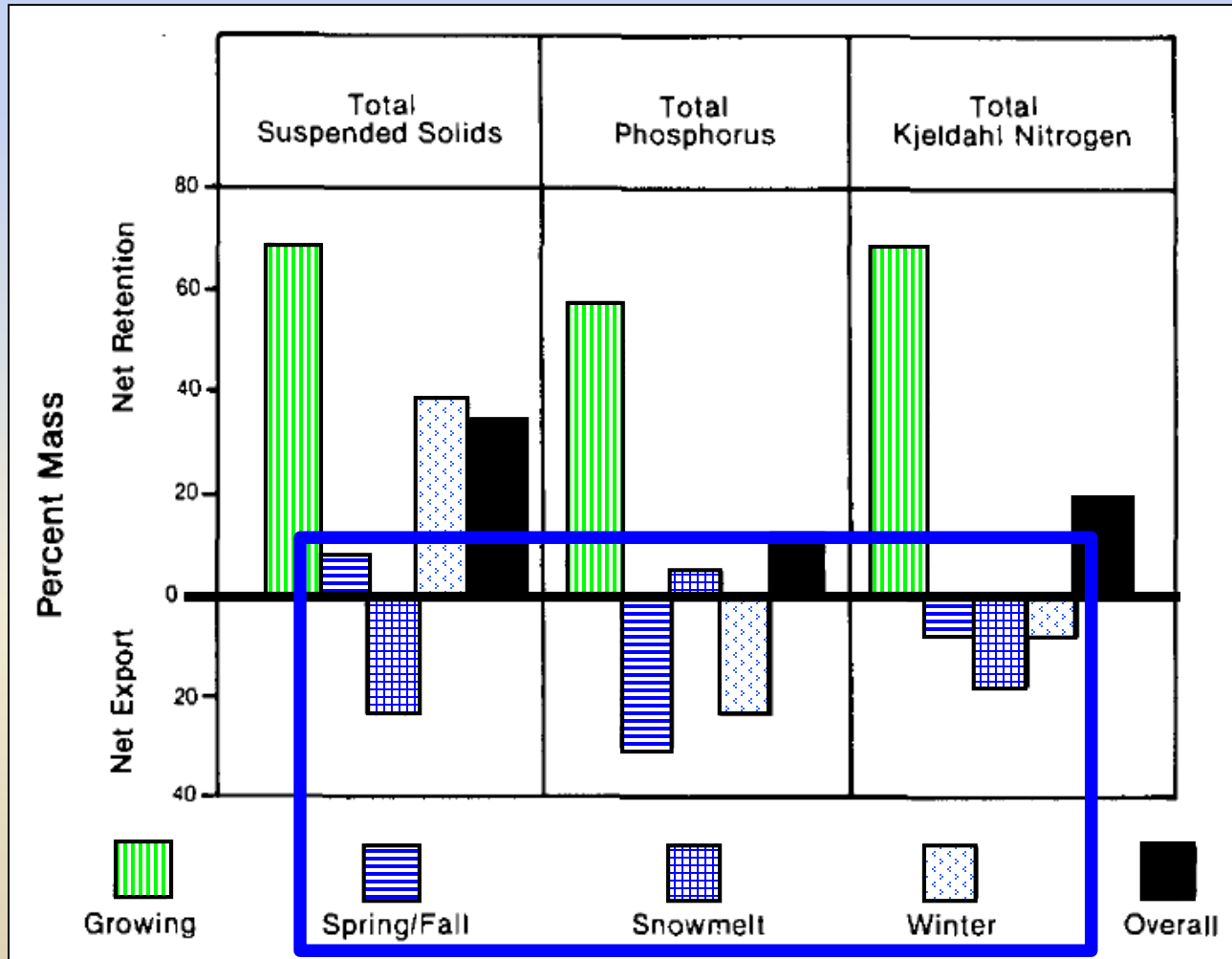


**Flow is often concentrated in only a small area of the buffer,  
overwhelming the nutrient retention system**



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# Barnyard vegetative filter strips: Ineffective outside growing season in Vermont



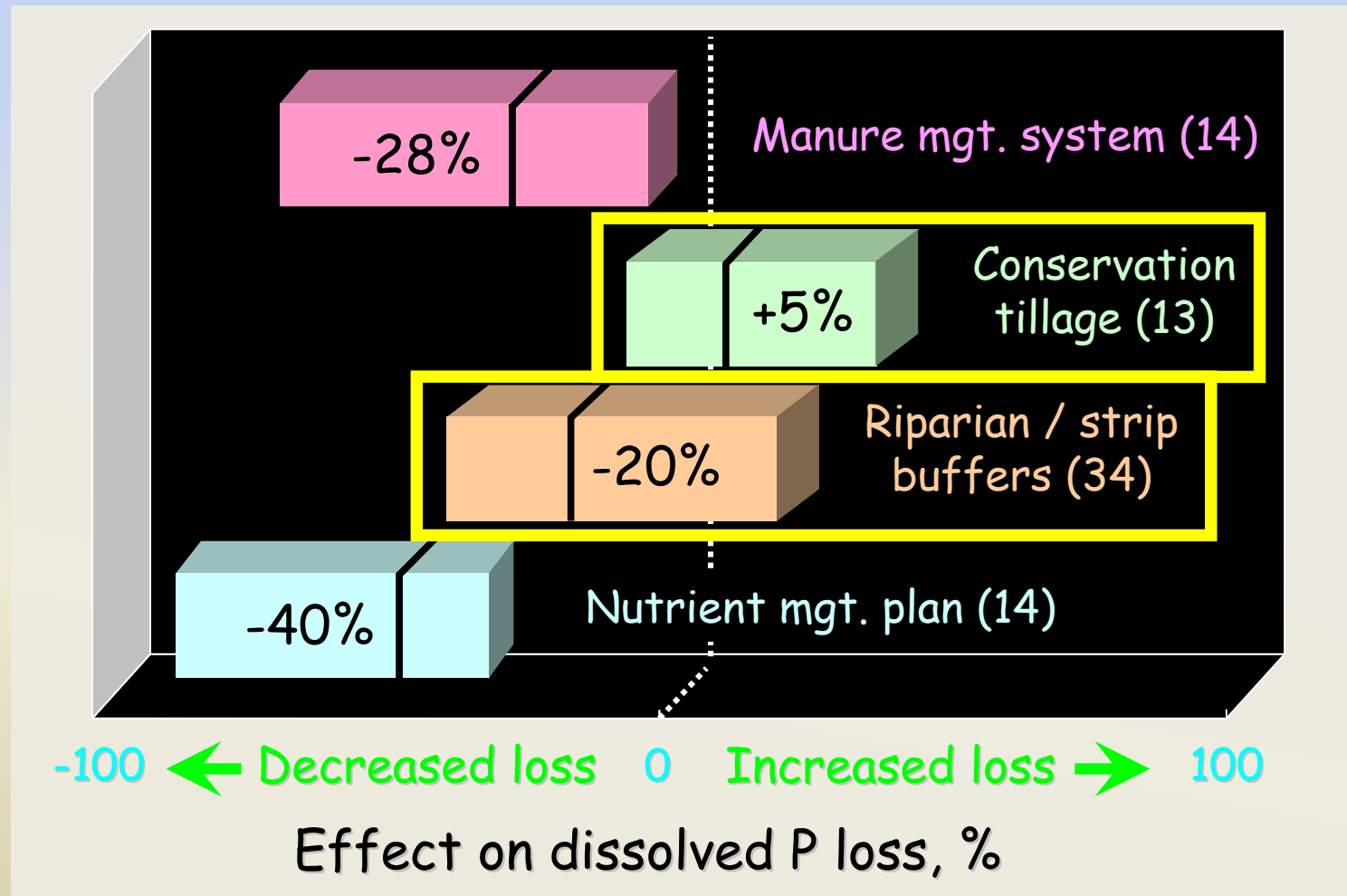
Schellinger & Clausen JEQ 1992



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# BMP effectiveness for reducing losses of dissolved P

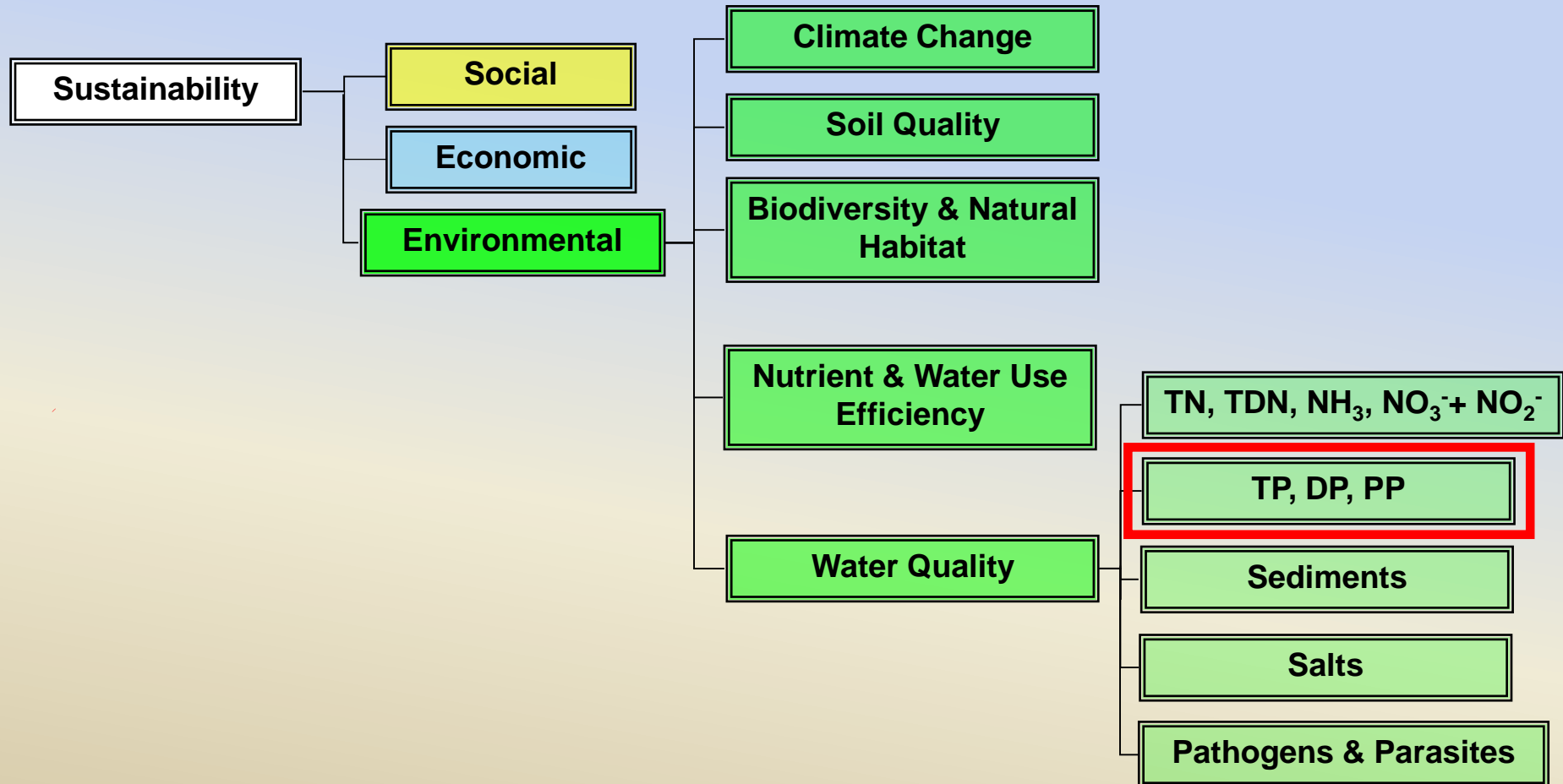
(Sharpley, adapted from Gitau et al. JSWC, 2005)





# Balancing Benefits, Co-Benefits, and Trade-Offs

- Also, remember that P loss is only one of many objectives that agricultural practices must address to be sustainable



# Balancing Benefits, Co-Benefits, and Trade-Offs

- No BMP, including conservation tillage, perennial forage or vegetated buffers is a cure-all, for all environmental issues and situations



- BMPs have different effects on different issues (eg. N vs P) in different environments (eg. rainfall on sloping land vs. snowmelt runoff on plains)
- Co-benefits are variable, but trade-offs are inevitable ... let's use knowledge to maximize co-benefits & minimize trade-offs



# Balancing Benefits, Co-Benefits, and Trade-Offs

- Perhaps it's time to treat environmental health like human health ... with more effort to aim for improved overall health:
  - Diagnose the correct cause
    - assess each case individually and comprehensively
    - identify the real cause of the most important problem(s)
  - Prescribe the right cure
    - make sure the “cure” works
    - treat with precision
    - consider all the benefits
    - consider all the “side effects”
    - continuously monitor, adapt & fine tune the treatment



# Overall Summary and Conclusions



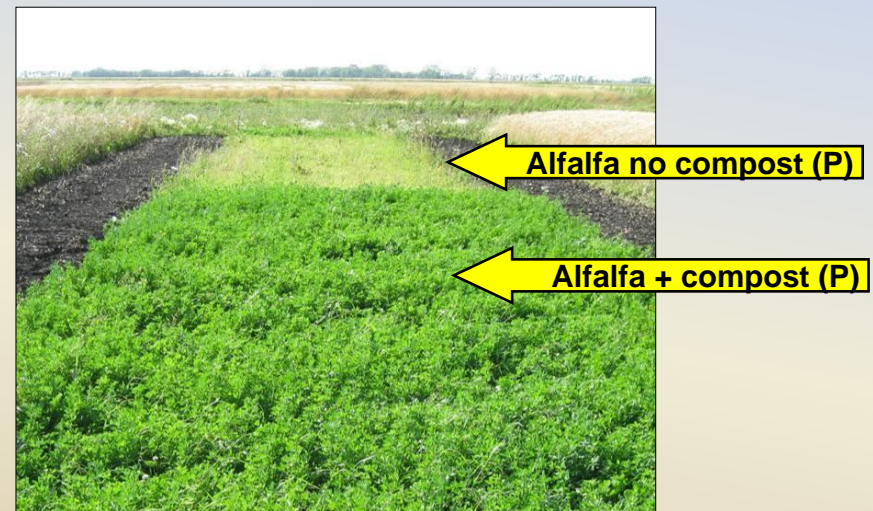
1. Starter P improves early season growth, advances maturity, and increases yield in corn, but has little benefit for soybean.

However, we need to add enough P to balance removal to maintain long term productivity for the whole crop rotation.



MAP 27 lb  $P_2O_5$ /ac

No P Check



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# Overall Summary and Conclusions, cont'd.



2. Careful management of P rate, placement & timing is critical for reducing the risk of P loss to surface water ...

especially considering that very small concentrations of P cause big problems with water quality ...

and some traditional soil and water conservation practices that reduce water erosion may increase the loss of dissolved P in Northern Great Plains watersheds



Photo: Fisheries & Oceans Canada



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# Overall Summary and Conclusions, cont'd.



3. We should be make sure that “beneficial management practices” are truly beneficial under local conditions ...

and aim for improving overall environmental health, being careful to consider all the co-benefits and trade-offs of beneficial management practices

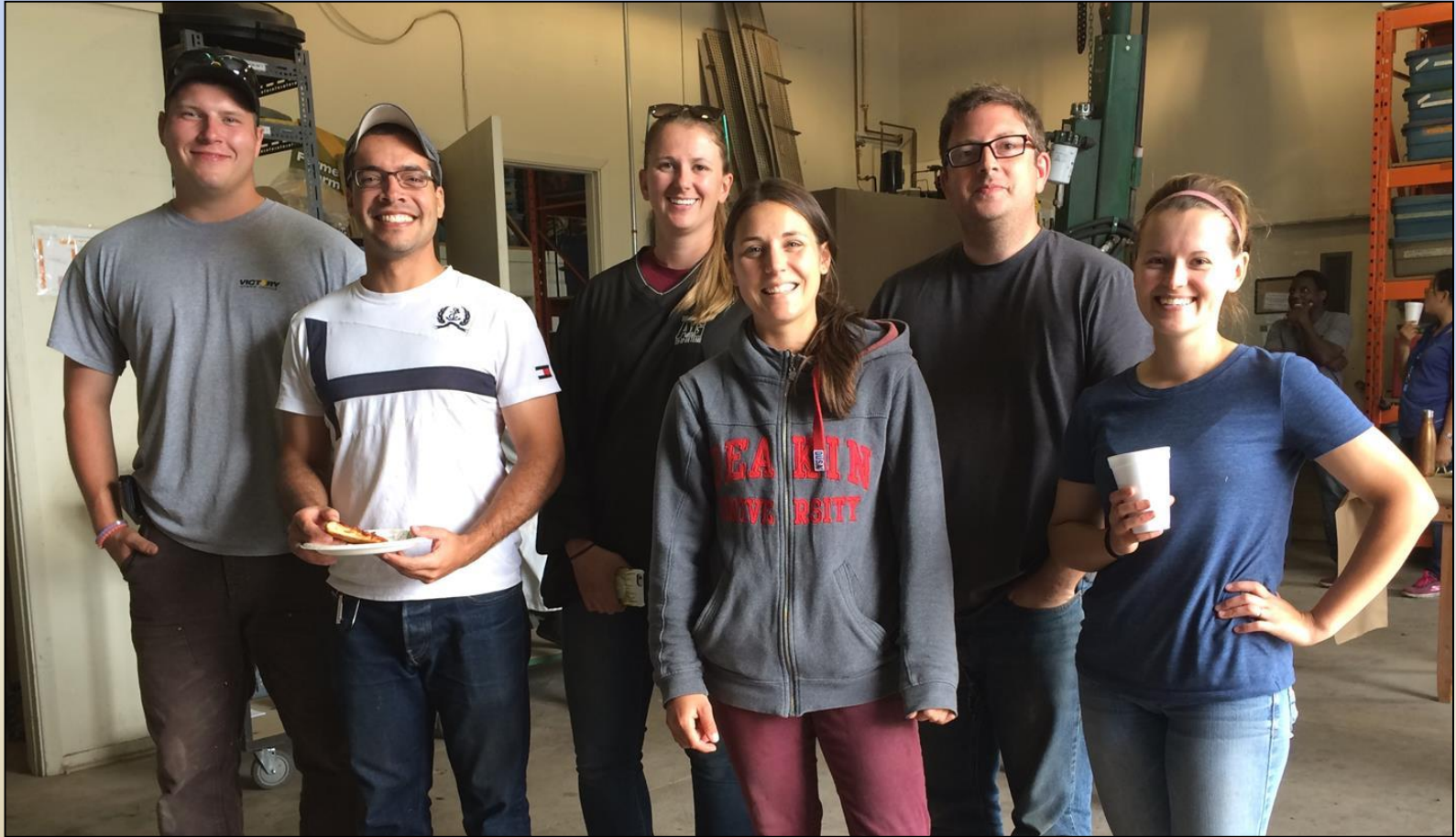


# Acknowledgements

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# Thank You!



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